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Palestinians welcome EU stand on Mideast peace deadlock

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority welcomed on Monday a policy statement by EU leaders this weekend which called for a halt to Jewish settlement building and backed the notion of Palestinian independence.

Yasser Arafat. "It is important for Europe, which understands the rights of Palestinians, to continue to play a role in the Middle East," he told AFP.

Mr. Arafat is scheduled on Friday to visit Luxembourg, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the 15-member European Union. Mr. Abu Rudeina said.

Thursday President Arafat is due to meet in London with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to discuss the latest efforts to break a months-long deadlock in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

In a four-page declaration issued following a weekend summit in Luxembourg, the EU said it would "continue applying all its political and moral weight toward assuring that [peace] accords already concluded are fully put into operation on a reciprocal basis, as much by the Israelis and the Palestinians."

The Union called for an end to "all counter-productive unilateral actions, such as those concerning settlements and Jerusalem" and promised to help strengthen "support for Palestinian institutions in east Jerusalem" — the part of the city occupied by Israel.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel launches raid south of Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP) — Israeli warplanes launched an air raid on suspected bases of a pro-Syrian Palestinian movement on a hill south of the capital on Monday evening, security services said. A Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC) spokesman said the attack caused damage but no casualties. An Israeli jet fired four air-to-ground missiles at 10-minute intervals on Naameh hill, 15 kilometres south of Beirut, where the PFLP-GC has positions, a spokesman for the group said. A few minutes later, Israeli aircraft flew over the area at low altitude, simulating two more raids by diving without dropping any bombs, the spokesman added. Security services said that Lebanese soldiers on the coast south of Beirut responded with anti-aircraft fire to force the Israeli planes higher. In Israel, a military spokesman confirmed the air raids.

Arab-Israeli MP meets Syrian officials

DAMASCUS (AFP) — An Arab-Israeli MP, Azmi Bishara, held talks here Monday before making what would be the first visit to Lebanon by a member of the Israeli parliament. Palestinian sources said. Mr. Bishara, a member of a communist opposition party, held talks here with George Habbash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, PFLP spokesman Maher Taher told AFP. "The talks focused on Palestinian conditions in the occupied territories and on issues related to the Middle East peace process," Mr. Taher said. Mr. Bishara, who arrived in Damascus on Sunday, was also due to meet with Syrian officials during his two-day visit to the Syrian capital. Mr. Taher said. Mr. Bishara plans to travel to neighbouring Lebanon on Wednesday to take part in a seminar — "The Arabs and Globalisation" due to be held Dec. 18-20. There has been no word, however, on whether Lebanese authorities will allow him to make an unprecedented visit to Beirut by an Israeli MP.

Turkish jets bomb Kurdish rebel camps

ANKARA (AP) — Turkish warplanes on Monday bombed camps maintained by rebel Kurds along the Iranian border in northern Iraq, Turkey's semi-official news agency, Turkish ground troops also attacked rebel positions on the snow-covered Kel Mehmet and Cudi Mountains, near the Turkish border, the agency said. Military officials were not available for comment and no casualty figures were released for the latest two-week old offensive against Turkish Kurds based in Iraq. About 20,000 Turkish soldiers and 8,000 fighters of an allied Iraqi group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, are taking part in the offensive, one of many cross-border raids over the last two years.

Iraqi vice-president leaves Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iraqi Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan left Iran Monday after an eight-day visit which included attending last week's pan-Islamic summit here, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported. Mr. Ramadan, the highest-ranking Iraqi official to visit Iran since the end of their 1980-1988 war, left the country by road accompanied by Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Sahhaf, the agency said. Iranian President Mohammad Khatami called on Iraq's leaders Thursday to "forget the past and turn over a new page in relations" between the two states. He made the remark during a meeting with Mr. Ramadan on the sidelines of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit which ended here Thursday.

32,000 Lebanese wanted for drug offences

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon has arrest warrants outstanding for nearly 32,000 residents of the Bekaa Valley, the site of large-scale drug manufacturing during the Lebanese civil war, a top Lebanese official said Monday. The Lebanese news media cited parliamentary deputy speaker Elie Ferzli, a deputy from the Bekaa in eastern Lebanon, as saying some 31,700 people are wanted for growing Indian cannabis and poppies and for drug trafficking, which became a billion-dollar business during the country's 1975-1990 civil war. Addressing leading figures from the Bekaa, Mr. Ferzli called for a general amnesty for everyone involved in cultivating and dealing in drugs, but with a doubling of legal penalties against them if they return to the trade. Bekaa-elected officials have repeatedly called for pardons for all former drug traffickers.

Iran arrests leading liberal opposition figure

TEHRAN (AFP) — The head of Iran's leading liberal opposition movement has been arrested, the group said in a statement Monday. Ibrahim Yazdi, secretary general of the Movement for the Liberation of Iran (MLI), "was called in for questioning" Sunday and then "transferred to Evin," Tehran's principal prison, the statement said. "Up to now, the judicial authorities have given no information about the charges," the statement added. Mr. Yazdi, 65, was foreign minister in the government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan set up after the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. The MLI, which is not legally recognised but is tolerated by the government, opposes the regime while supporting the principle of an Islamic Republic.

34 killed in Algeria violence — papers

PARIS (R) — Gunmen killed 34 civilians, including a three-year-old child and a pregnant woman, in the latest series of attacks in Algiers and other Algerian regions, national newspapers said on Monday.

Assaults cut the throats of 14 people in Cheraga area in the northeast of the capital — a city of between three and four million people — overnight Friday-Saturday, Liberte newspaper said.

Gunmen killed eight civilians at a fake roadblock near Khemis Meliana, 90 kilometres southwest of Algiers, on Friday, the newspaper said.

Five civilians were also killed at a fake roadblock at the weekend in Ain Defla region, 20 kilometres northwest of Khemis Meliana, it added.

Gunmen slashed the throats and decapitated three civilians at the weekend and dumped their bodies at a bus station in Cheraga, La Tribune newspaper said.

In another attack, two young people were shot dead at the weekend near Betioua, one of Algeria's main oil and gas export outlets, some 400 kilometres west of Algiers, Liberte said.

Two traders travelling from Ain Defla to Algiers were caught at a fake roadblock on Thursday and killed by gunmen, it said.

The 14 people massacred in Cheraga were members of two families, La Tribune said. One of the families, named Saad, had come to the capital after fleeing Medea Area, 70 kilometres south of Algiers, to escape a bout of killing there, it said.

The attackers abducted five girls after killing their relatives and blew up one of the houses with explosive before they fled, La Tribune and Liberte said.

The massacres came nearly two weeks before the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in which guerrillas have usually stepped up killings, mostly in Algiers.

Residents said security forces had already increased roadblocks in Algiers and around the city. Ramadan is expected at the end of this month, dependant on the sighting of the moon.

Cheraga is the site of several military and paramilitary gendarmerie barracks and army intelligence facilities but the newspapers did not report any sign of intervention.



Masked Palestinians from Hamas burn a hanging effigy of the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Monday during a rally marking the tenth anniversary of the founding of Hamas. Hamas was founded by Sheikh Ahmed Yaseen on the Dec. 14, 1987 at the beginning of the Palestinian intifada (Reuters photo)

Hamas gains in popularity — poll

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) has gained in popularity since the return to Gaza City in October of its spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, according to a poll published Monday.

Seventeen per cent of the 1,180 Palestinians surveyed by the independent Palestinian Media and Communication Centre said they support Hamas, the main opposition group to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat. Only 11 per cent said in July that they backed Hamas. Sheikh Yassin, who had been serving a life sentence in Israel, was released as part of a deal between the Jewish

state and Jordan following a botched Israeli attempt to assassinate a Hamas political official in Amman.

Mr. Arafat's group, Fatah, was still by far the most popular among Palestinians, with 41 per cent support in the latest poll, compared to 36 per cent in July.

The vast majority of Palestinians are also still behind the peace process with Israel despite the lack of progress over the past nine months.

Seventy-four per cent of those questioned said they support the peace process while 69 per cent said in July that they backed it.

The poll had a margin of error of three per cent.

Hizbollah cites progress in prisoner swap negotiations

BEIRUT (AP) — A deal to swap Lebanese prisoners for the remains of Israeli soldiers could be reached by the end of the year if Israel agrees to free more detainees, Hizbollah said Monday.

Nayef Koraim, a spokesman for the Hizbollah group, reported progress in the negotiations with Israel but said a breakthrough hinged on Israel.

Mohammad Fneish, a Hizbollah member of the Lebanese parliament, said Israel had offered to release 20 Lebanese prisoners as well as the remains of guerrillas for the body parts of Israeli soldiers killed in a botched commando raid in southern Lebanon on Sept. 5.

Mr. Koraim said Hizbollah has been demanding that Israel free more than 20 prisoners, to determine the prisons from which they will be released and also provide names of prisoners.

"The ball is now in the Israeli court," Mr. Koraim told the Associated Press. "If the other side responds positively to Hizbollah's demands, a solution can be reached within two weeks."

"The current negotiations centre on the possibility of increasing the number of detainees to be included in the exchange," Mr. Fneish said in a published statement Monday.

He reiterated Hizbollah's position that priority should be given to prisoners rather than the remains of dead

guerrillas in Israeli hands. The remains include those of Hadi Nasrallah, son of Hizbollah's Secretary-General Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah, who was killed in clashes with Israeli troops on Sept. 12.

Israel is holding about 200 Lebanese prisoners, 150 of them at a detention camp in the town of Khiam in the Israeli-occupied border zone in southern Lebanon, and the rest in Israeli prisons.

Lebanese guerrillas hold body parts of Israeli soldiers killed in the Sept. 5 commando raid. Twelve soldiers died in the battle and most were taken by the retreating Israelis.

Hizbollah group displayed some of the body

parts after the incident. Others are believed in the hands of the Syrian-backed Amal militia and the Lebanese army.

The guerrilla groups, who are fighting to end Israel's 12-year-old occupation of the enclave, have called for the swap.

Hizbollah last year traded the remains of two Israeli soldiers for 45 Lebanese detainees held by Israel and its Lebanese allies.

The negotiations for a prisoner exchange deal have been undertaken mainly by the Geneva-headquartered International Committee of the Red Cross, whose delegates have been relaying messages between the Lebanese and Israeli governments.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 Sandakan
14:30 C.R.O.
15:00 Skippy
15:30 The Album Show
16:30 Square One T.V.
17:00 French Programmes
19:00 News in French
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 You Bet Your Life
20:00 Doc. — Skeleton Coast
20:30 Encounter
21:10 Hollywood Remembers
22:00 News in English
22:30 Margaret Volant
23:15 Drama — Scarlet and Black

PRAYER TIMES

05:01 Fajr
06:24 (Sunrise) Duha
11:31 Dhuhur
14:15 Asr
16:38 Maghreb
18:01 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church

Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel.
661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel.
622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751.
Armenian International Church
Tel. 865897
Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-

ment of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to drop, skies partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom, and winds westerly to moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman 07/14
Aqaba 10/20
Deserts 03/15
Jordan Valley 10/19

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 17, Aqaba 24 Humidity readings: Amman 37 per cent, Aqaba 35 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Issam Al-Azzam 890504
Dr. Nidal As'ad 751672
Dr. Khalid Klob 816715
Dr. Osama Al-Husseini 847289
Ferdows pharmacy 778336

Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
IRBIT:
Dr. Chazi Ta'ammeh 250080
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Randa Shahin 995170
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Dept. 661111
Civil Defence Immediate-Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 0853200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre
813813/32
Khadiji Maternity 644281/6
Akileh Maternity 64241/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Musharraf Hospital 66727/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3
Al-Basitir 775111/26
Army, Marka 89161/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)883323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)880561
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)886732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)880940

IRBIT:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
04:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:20 Beirut (RJ)
06:30 Abu Dhabi, Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)
08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:25 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:30 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
19:30 Jeddah (RJ)
20:30 Damascus, Larnaca (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
21:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
14:35 Istanbul (TK)
14:40 Munich (YP)
16:30 Rome (AZ)
18:30 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
20:00 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
22:20 London (BA)
23:35 Amsterdam (KL)
23:35 Larnaca (CY)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
07:45 Aqaba (RW)
09:05 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
09:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:20 Tel Aviv (RW)
18:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:20 Aqaba (RW)
22:50 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

Other Flights
02:25 Amsterdam (KL)
03:00 Athens (OA)
15:40 Munich (YP)
15:45 Istanbul (TK)
17:30 Rome (AZ)
19:30 Dubai (EK)
21:20 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 Cairo (MS)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
06:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
08:15 Aqaba (RW)
09:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
17:45 Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)
17:55 Tel Aviv (RW)
20:30 Amman (QAIA) (RW)
21:50 Aqaba (RW)

King orders release of youths detained for disturbance

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday ordered the release of all citizens detained by the police in the northern badia region following disturbances that occurred late last month.

A group of youths went on a rampage on Nov. 24, destroying government facilities in the villages of Mikafieh and Salhih in the Mafraq governorate. Some newspapers attributed the disturbance to

local residents' dissatisfaction with the lack of their tribes' representation in the newly-formed Parliament.

The reports at that time said the youths burned the facilities of a two-room medical centre, broke the windows of a school, and started a small fire in one of its classes.

There were no injuries reported but damage was estimated at more than JD1,000 and those involved in the rioting were held for questioning.

According to a report Monday by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, the King ordered the release of the detainees after visiting the northern badia region Sunday and meeting residents there.

King Hussein, who made the visit after opening a mosque in the city of Irbid, was welcomed by the tribal chiefs of the badia region, including the most prominent local tribal leader, Sheikh Mithqal Fawaz.

Prince Ra'd issues appeal for efforts to reduce road accidents

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid, the chief chamberlain, Monday appealed to the public to join forces with the concerned authorities in their efforts to reduce road accidents, which he said result in huge human and economic losses to the country.

Addressing the opening session of a two-day seminar on traffic safety organized by the Public Security Department (PSD), Prince Ra'd said official statistics showed that accidents last year killed 552 people and injured 15,357 others.

"Our country is suffering more than many other countries from traffic problems,

which result in the loss of human life and the injury of many people who become permanently handicapped," said the Prince.

Stating that road accidents are also obstructing economic development, he said all road users are called upon to contribute to national efforts to stem accidents by respecting and abiding by traffic rules.

Prince Ra'd, who is the president of the Jordan Sports Federation for the Handicapped, said the federation, in association with the PSD and other concerned authorities, are currently preparing a national strategy for the prevention of road accidents, which he said are the leading cause of disabilities in Jordan.

Rawhi Sharif, a representative from the Jordan Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents, said studies of the accidents in Jordan revealed that 95 per cent are caused by road users who fail to respect traffic rules, particularly speed limits.

Three working papers were reviewed at the first session covering various aspects of road accidents, their causes, and the people involved, as well as suggested remedies.

Majali replies to deputies' statements

Prime Minister outlines Cabinet's plan of action

AMMAN (Petra) — Following are major excerpts of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali's reply to the debate on the vote of confidence in his government:

"The government has listened to the deputies' views and will do all that is in its power to give due care and attention to these views, though matters will not be easy. But we promise to exert our best efforts in cooperation with the House to translate your aspirations into practice and to incorporate the outcome into the people's present and future life.

"We are facing difficult circumstances and we in Jordan are more affected by the hard conditions around us than our ability to influence these circumstances, so we have to concentrate our efforts on building the nation's institutions, rallying the nation's ranks, improving production, raising the standard of education, culture, and necessary skills, and providing aid to the needy.

"The government has noted your reply to the Speech from the Throne, especially those issues that are on the minds of the people. These for the most part include accountability, transparency, and fighting corruption as well as giving due attention to the armed forces and the security departments to ensure security.

"The government has also noted requests for a comprehensive health plan for all Jordanians and for finalising legislation in the fields of politics, economy, culture, and administration.

"The priorities for Jordan are to build national security and enhance national unity and social solidarity among the various classes of people. Therefore, the government seeks to corroborate the concept of 'the state of law and institutions' and will dedicate its efforts to introduce transparent systems. It will promote the judiciary and respect its independence, modernise laws, and introduce a programme leading to decentralisation.

"As to the question of corruption, the government has given this matter its total attention because it is a disease that has its own causes and symptoms. Fighting the symptoms only is not enough if we do not eradicate the causes. That is why the government has sought to promote the work of control and inspection in order to flush out corruption.

Since last year, the Department for Combating Corruption has referred 83 cases to court, of which 32 were referred this year.

"As for cases of embezzlement, abuse of public property, and bribery, the government has referred 161 cases to the prosecutor general.

"Bloated administration is a political term that means an increase of government employees over the government department's needs, coupled with weakness in performance and absence of clear and transparent principles.

"The number of [public sector] employees has increased over the years until it has become equal to half of the Jordanian work force. This is one of the highest rates in the world. Still, many graduates hope to get positions in government offices in order to benefit from salaries and other advantages. Salaries and wages, as well as pensions, account for 60 per cent of the total current expenditure in the fiscal budget. This is a complicated problem but...the solution does not lie in laying off employees. The government has applied a plan designed to achieve job

security and higher efficiency. The government has stopped new appointments and has cancelled unneeded jobs. It also opened the door for employees wishing to retire to do so, but it will not replace them with others.

"The government seeks to implement a decentralisation plan and expand participation in decision making. The government has amended a number of regulations aimed at giving powers to officials in different regions instead of keeping these powers centralised in the ministries.

"In 1988, the Ministry of Education began an ambitious, long-term plan to develop the educational system. This plan, which stemmed from the national educational conference supervised by HRH Crown Prince Hassan, has included changes in syllabi, school buildings, text books, and teacher efficiency.

"In the higher education sector, the government is currently preparing an ambitious plan for the development of community colleges and universities. The government has already referred three draft laws on this matter to Parliament. University education requires improving and promoting the financial capabilities of universities.

"The council of higher education is introducing a plan to support poor students.

"Health services should be provided to all citizens and this is one of the government's main objectives. The government has worked out a strategy on health care covering the period 1998-2010. The government has also prepared a comprehensive plan on social care that was endorsed by the Cabinet. This plan accommodates the needs of the handicapped so they can be given care at specialised institutions, which number about 180 in Jordan offering services to more than 20,000 people.

"The government is convinced of the benefits of the economic restructuring programme and realises that it has had some negative effects on the less fortunate sectors of the society. Therefore, it has introduced the social security package to ensure a decent standard of living for Jordanians and equal opportunities to participate in development and the social, economic, and political arenas.

"This plan includes four measures to rehabilitate people and provide them with the necessary skills for earning a living. First, the plan aims to develop the work of the national aid fund. Second, it provides for vocational training programmes. Third, it provides for funding small-size businesses. Fourth, it provides for basic infrastructure services in the badia, rural, and urban areas, as well as refugee camps.

"The government has endorsed an information plan designed to boost interaction among the people and the country's different institutions. The plan aims to release creative forces and enable talented people among writers, artists, scientists...to open up to the democratic process. It also aims to open the way for people to express their views and accept other people's views, as well as to portray Jordan's cultural image with all its achievements and potential. To realise these goals, the government has reactivated the Higher Council for National Guidance, but under the title of the Higher Council for Information.

"A great number of deputies have wondered about the government's motives for passing the temporary publication law. Successive governments have noticed that since the enactment of the 1993 Press and Publications Law, the number of weekly tabloids has increased to over twenty. It was noticed that there was a close relationship between the degree of attacks and personal slandering of Arab leaders and these tabloids' financial capabilities. Is it reasonable to have weekly newspapers, operating on budgets of a few hundred dinars, that are capable of distorting Jordan's relations in the Arab World and spreading rumours and vice? How can such newspapers, with limited resources, secure decent livelihoods for their workers unless they resort to illegal measures to cover expenses? The government is keen on protecting freedom of expression and to keep this right within the law. However, the previous

law did not provide deterrent penalties to violators and did not provide minimum requirements for the publication of a well-respected newspaper, nor did it establish qualifications for those who edit the newspapers.

"The new law has taken care of these new matters and has granted the judiciary more power to deal with violations. I know that some people support the previous law and that is why they have raised a hue and cry about it, accusing us that we are stifling freedom of expression. Is there freedom of the press anywhere in the world that is not regulated by law? Do courts not settle issues concerning excesses and violations? However, this law is now before you to decide upon...

"As to the garbage dump in Russeifa, the government has issued directives for shifting it to some other place. Measures will soon be completed in this concern. The government will assign certain plots of state-owned land for the creation of public gardens.

"The social security umbrella is being enlarged in order to cover the largest number of people. It will provide security against unemployment and this is what the Social Security Corporation is aiming to achieve through the development of its regulations.

"The government is giving particular attention to the dual problem of poverty and unemployment. There is no doubt that these two problems have been a cause for concern for many families in Jordan. The government realises that confronting poverty and unemployment constitute the basic social and economic challenge. Official statistics have shown that unemployment among Jordanians willing to work and able to work stands at around 15 per cent of the total work force.

"Some of the deputies have wondered about the reason behind soaring prices and the rising cost of living. Studies conducted on the cost of living have shown that in the first eleven months of this year it rose by 2.7 per cent, whereas the increase in the average salary, as it was recorded in the 1989 fiscal budget, rose by 3.2 per cent.

"As for water resources,

it has been shown that the cost of supplying water has been on the rise and the government charges the public only a fraction of the real cost of pumping, distribution, and supply. When the government decided to increase water tariffs, it took into account the interests of low-income groups.

"In agriculture, the government has endorsed a political document aimed at boosting Jordan's ability to attain self-sufficiency in food. This plan seeks to improve the quality of products destined for Arab and European countries.

"In the field of tourism, we have gone a long way towards investments in hotels, resthouses, restaurants, and tourist transport, among other utilities. Millions of dinars have been invested in these areas, opening up employment opportunities for thousands of Jordanians. This will no doubt bring foreign currency into Jordan. We will continue marketing Jordan abroad and we will create a favourable climate to encourage tourists to come to the country.

"The government has made a commitment to present the House with a new elections law. We will discuss it together during the present Parliament session because we want the new law to cater to national aspirations. The government will work out a new law on political parties and this requires sincere efforts on the part of responsible people so that we can arrive at a modern formula.

"On foreign affairs, Jordan will go ahead with its endeavours to achieve comprehensive, just, and honourable peace on all tracks. We will support the national interests of the Palestinians and help them regain their legitimate rights and establish an independent state on their soil.

"We will continue to build strong relations with Arab states and support the work and development of pan-Arab institutions. We will also continue to defend the right of the Iraqi people to live in dignity and freedom and will do our best to develop our relations with Islamic states."

See deputies' statements on page 7.

Tarshihi urges donor nations to fulfill UNRWA commitments

AMMAN (J.T.) — Director General of the Palestinian Affairs Department Ibrahim Tarshihi Monday urged the world community to fulfill its commitments to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) so that it can shoulder its humanitarian responsibilities towards the Palestinian refugees.

Any failure on the part of the donor nations to continue providing funds to the agency, he said, would force UNRWA to take austerity measures and reduce its services to the refugees in its fields of operations in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. Mr. Tarshihi said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Mr. Tarshihi's call came in the wake of remarks by UNRWA Commissioner General Peter Hansen last week, when he said the donor nations' pledges of \$126 million, in addition to \$30 million contributed by the European Union, would cover only half of the agency's 1998 budget of \$314 million.

Mr. Hansen was speaking in Amman after he was called from his headquarters in Gaza to examine complaints by UNRWA staff, who staged a sit-in at the agency's Amman headquarters demanding higher salaries and better working conditions.

Mr. Tarshihi said he feared that the UNRWA workers would resort to further sit-ins and work stoppages should the donor nations fail to provide the agency with additional funds.

The government will not interfere with the employees' actions because it considers work stoppages or sit-ins as the agency's internal affairs, he said.

Referring to Jordan's role,

UNRWA employees should respect regulations — Hansen

AMMAN (J.T.) — United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Commissioner General Peter Hansen Monday said all agency employees should respect the agency's regulations and engage in dialogue in the course of trying to have their demands met rather than resorting to work stoppages or other "illegal" actions.

Speaking at a press conference following a meeting with representatives of donor nations and Arab states hosting Palestinian refugees, Mr. Hansen said he did not take disciplinary action against any of the UNRWA staff who staged a sit-in last week to protest the agency's failure to meet their demands for salary increases and other benefits.

Mr. Hansen, who refused to meet with the strikers at that time, said he was willing to discuss general issues with their representatives but he

added that questions related to salary, early retirement, and other benefits should be discussed with the agency's administration.

Referring to the meeting held with the representatives of the donor and host countries, he said he normally holds such meetings every few months to review the agency's financial state and other matters.

In a bid to save funds, the agency has terminated the employment of 15 per cent of the international staff, he said.

Mr. Hansen said he told the meeting about the agency's drive to raise more funds from the donor nations to pursue its services in the coming year.

UNRWA has appealed to the donor nations for an additional \$11 million grant to meet the extra needs for the refugees in Lebanon, but has received pledges of only \$8 million so far, he added.

They called the agency's failure to heed their demands.

They accused UNRWA of deliberately stalling by neglecting their demands, which included early retirement benefits, compensation for termination of employment, and higher pay.

In response to the employees' sit-in, Mr. Hansen made it clear that the agency's financial situation does not allow it to meet their demands.

he said the Kingdom is not only hosting the majority of Palestinian refugees, but also contributes at least \$350 million annually on in-kind social, health, educational, and infrastructure services for the refugees living in Jordan.

The sit-in, which was carried out by 22 agency employees representing some 22,000 UNRWA staff members in the host countries, protested against what

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS
* "No More Mr. Nice Guy" at Goethe-Institut, Jabal Amman at 7:00 p.m.
* "Element of Doubt" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR/RECITAL
* Annual Christmas bazaar, sponsored by Al Hussein Society for the Physically Handicapped, at the Amman Marriott Hotel at 10:30 a.m.

EXHIBITIONS
* Works by Ghada Dahdalah at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 20.

* Photo exhibition by Edgardo Rodriguez entitled "Arab Presence in Cuban Architecture" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 20.
* Plastic (abstract) art by Iraqi artist Dhaia Khazai at Hammurabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Dec. 18.
* One-day photo exhibition at the French School of Amman by school students (Tel. 826830).

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN NOOR
AL-HUSSEIN SOCIETY
FOR THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

INVITES YOU TO ITS
ANNUAL BAZAAR
AT THE AMMAN MARRIOTT HOTEL
TUESDAY, THE 16TH OF DECEMBER, 1997
AT 10:30 A.M.

INTERNATIONAL BAKE SALE
CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS
HANDICRAFTS
GIFT ITEMS

Child malnutrition is silent emergency — UNICEF

GENEVA (AFP) — Infant malnutrition hitting one child in two in south Asia and one in three in Africa is the world's "silent emergency," the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) said in its annual assessment published Monday.

Twelve million children under five die every year, and malnutrition is a factor in 55 per cent of cases, UNICEF said in its report, entitled "The State of the World's Children."

"Malnutrition is rarely regarded as an emergency; the children affected are not facing famine and betray few or no obvious signs," the report said.

"Yet the largely invisible crisis of malnutrition is implicated in more than half of all child deaths worldwide and violates children's rights in profound ways, compromising their physical and mental development and helping perpetuate poverty."

"More widespread than many suspect — with one out of every three children affected — malnutrition lowers the productivity and ability of entire societies."

Three-quarters of children who die of malnutrition betray no obvious symptoms, UNICEF said, but among those who survive it causes physical and mental handicaps and vulnerability to infection.

Some 183 million chil-

dren are underweight for their age, 67 million are emaciated and 226 million experience stunted growth, the report said.

Among the most extreme syndromes is kwashiorkor, caused by protein deficiency, with its characteristic distended stomach and skin sores, but other diseases result from deficiencies in essential minerals and vitamins.

Two billion people, mainly women and children, suf-

fer from lack of iron and resulting anaemia, which is responsible for between 20 and 30 per cent of baby deaths in Africa.

Vitamin A deficiency affects 100 million people, causing blindness, maternal deaths and lowered immunity to such disorders as diarrhoea, which kills 2.2 million infants annually, and measles, which kills one million.

Zinc deficiency stunts growth and lack of iodine

causes brain damage, cretinism and goitre.

Malnutrition is closely linked to poverty, UNICEF said, noting that it also occurs in wealthy countries like Britain and the United States, where one child in five is below the poverty line and more than 13 million people struggle to find adequate food.

But the report concluded that "sentinels of progress are lighting the way."

"Nearly 60 per cent of salt is now iodised, and millions of children each year are spared mental retardation as a result."

"Vitamin A supplementation is helping bolster disease resistance in children and may soon become an important measure in helping reduce maternal deaths around the world."

"Communities are working together to identify their problems, decide on their options and take action, with women emerging to play leadership roles that spark numerous changes in other people's lives."

"Children have the right, recognised in international law, to good nutrition," the report said. "The world has the obligation to protect that right, building on both the great experience gained and the scientific knowledge achieved."

"Action is both possible and imperative."

'World has money, needs political will to tackle poverty'

GENEVA (AFP) — The world has enough money to tackle malnutrition and other problems linked to poverty. All it needs now is the political will, the U.N. Children's Fund said in its annual report Monday.

"In a \$28 trillion global economy, the problem is surely not a lack of resources. But it may be more useful to see the challenge as a matter of political choice," the UNICEF assessment said.

Remedies are well known and easily provided: iodised salt, vitamin, iron and folic acid supplements for women and rehydration salts for children. But the problem can only be resolved once and for all if food security is ensured, giving all people access to food of sufficient quantity and quality, UNICEF stressed.

Health services must also be made available at reasonable cost and adequate supplies of drinking water provided, the report added.

Breast-feeding promotes good infant nutrition, as long as the mother has an adequate diet. This means that women in the Third World need equal access to health care and food.

UNICEF called for an increase in development aid to which better-off countries currently devote just 0.27 per cent of gross national product (GNP). It also urged a reduction in Third World debt levels, which exceeded \$2 trillion in 1995.

French FM meets prosecutor amid row over Bosnian war criminals

PARIS (AFP) — Chief U.N. war crimes prosecutor Louise Arbour met French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine Monday after charging that French peacekeepers in Bosnia are not doing enough to bring indicted war criminals to justice.

The meeting, originally scheduled for late afternoon, was brought forward at Mr. Vedrine's request following Ms. Arbour's weekend attack on France's cooperation with the U.N. tribunal.

Ms. Arbour said in a series of interviews over the weekend that French peacekeepers in the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia were doing nothing to apprehend Bosnia's mainly Serb war crimes suspects.

"Most of those indicted (by the U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY) have not been arrested. There are a great number of them in the French sector," Ms. Arbour said on French television Sunday.

France commands the south-east sector of Bosnia that includes the Serb hard-line stronghold Pale, home among others to the most prominent Bosnian Serb war crimes suspect, former Serb leader Radovan Karadzic. The area also includes the towns of Han Pijesak and Foca, known as homes of other suspects.

In response to the accusations, Defence Minister Alain Richard said the French government had always backed the arrest of war criminals. In a message to the armed forces including peacekeepers in Bosnia, Mr. Richard said "the French

authorities have constantly supported the arrest of the war criminals."

In practice, no arrests have ever been carried out in the French sector by international troops. Two Serb officers were arrested in 1996 by Bosnian army officers and British troops in July this year swooped on two Serb suspects, arresting one and killing another in a shootout. American forces have yet to carry out any arrests.

The row has also concentrated on France's level of cooperation with the ICTY which was set up in 1993 to prosecute all those thought responsible for war crimes in the wars in former Yugoslavia.

Mr. Richard last Monday said no French officer would appear in person at the ICTY and attacked the court's procedures.

French officers, such as those who commanded U.N. forces in former Yugoslavia during the Bosnian war, would only answer written questions from the ICTY in future, he said. "It cannot be envisaged that French military officers who have held commands in international forces will take, alone, the responsibility for international operations," he minister said, adding that Paris "was not in favour of show justice, which is what the tribunal is."

Other nations' soldiers have made and continue to make appearances in person at the tribunal. Mr. Richard also said that more than 30 French officers had testified to the ICTY.

France has several thousand troops in the 30,000-strong SFOR and is in com-

mand of the southeast of Bosnia. Britain and the United States command the other sectors, with NATO ensuring overall command.

Under a carefully crafted NATO-led mandate, peacekeepers in Bosnia are not specifically mandated to arrest those indicted, but have orders to detain them if they come across them in the normal course of their duties and are in a position to do so safely.

But the mandate is flexible, according to Ms. Arbour.

Citing the British action in July, Ms. Arbour said Sunday there was "plenty of autonomy in each sector and there are many initiatives which could give rise to opportunities for arrests."

Saturday, Ms. Arbour told Le Monde newspaper the failure of the troops in the French-commanded sector to carry out a single arrest and the refusal to allow French officers to appear in person at the tribunal "leads to the conclusion that it is a policy. It is unacceptable," Ms. Arbour said.

She had to conclude that "the true intention is to block the court's access to the truth," she said.

Monday in Brussels, NATO Secretary General Javier Solana praised the role of French troops in Bosnia.

"I would like to praise the men and women of France who are participating in the SFOR in Bosnia. They are doing an outstanding job in difficult circumstances and are setting a fine example of courage and professionalism," Mr. Solana said.

Indonesians eat fruit to survive famine — report

JAKARTA (R) — More than 80,000 people in Indonesia's Moluccas region were facing food shortages because of severe drought, the official Antara news agency reported Monday.

The agency said villagers in three worst-hit districts in the southeast Maluku regency had been forced to forage for yam and fruit in the forest because of the drought.

"The drought has threatened 81,840 people in at least 130 villages in seven of eight sub-districts in southeast Maluku since September," W.M. Parinusa, head of the social services office, was quoted as saying Saturday.

Mr. Parinusa said forest fruit and yam had become scarce in Lemosa district.

The drought has triggered rampant forest fires in Indonesia and caused famine in the country's remote Irian Jaya province on the western side of New Guinea Island, where more than 500 people have died.

Rains have started in the western part of Indonesia but many other areas, mostly on the eastern side of the archipelago, remain parched.

Mr. Parinusa said no deaths had been reported yet from the drought in Maluku, but at least 50 buffaloes had been killed because of the food shortage.

He added that the government had sent at least 11.25 tonnes of rice to the villages.

Antara gave no further details. President Suharto last week ordered Planning Minister Ginandjar Kartasasmita to end the famine in Irian Jaya.

Authorities and non-governmental organisations have despatched tonnes of rice, noodles and blankets to the drought-stricken areas in Irian Jaya.



A South Korean supporter of Lee Hoi-Chang, presidential candidate of the ruling Grand National Party, with Mr. Lee's voting number 1 on his hands, waves as he listens to his speech in a street of Anyang (AFP photo)

S. Korean presidential candidates to lift ban on Japanese culture

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korea's three main presidential candidates have all pledged to lift the ban on Japanese culture if elected Thursday, but none of the three gave a timetable.

"No country has benefited from isolating itself from foreign culture," Kim Dae-Jung, the leading opposition candidate, said during a debate Sunday night.

"Our people have the ability to digest Japan's culture and make our culture richer," said 73-year-old Kim of the National Congress for New Politics (NCNP).

The televised debate was

the last between the three contenders before South Koreans go to the polls.

Majority Hannara or Grand National Party (GNP) candidate Lee Hoi-Chang also said he would open the door to Japanese culture, but only after serious discussions since there was still anti-Japanese sentiment among the older generation.

"We should not simply ban it. The young people are able to deal with Japanese culture. But when it should be allowed in will be decided after taking into consideration the feelings of the older generation."

Mr. Lee said.

Rhee In-Je, the youngest of the contenders, who is running third in the race, also said there was no need for the ban. "What we can take in, we should, and what we can export, we should."

Japanese movies, books, comics, cartoons and songs are still banned in South Korea, where many still have vivid memories of Japan's harsh colonial rule from 1910-45.

But there is a thriving black market, especially in Japanese pop culture items and comic books among the younger generation.

Japan opposition chief challenged for leadership

TOKYO (R) — Japan's top opposition leader Ichiro Ozawa Monday was challenged for the leadership post of the New Frontier Party (NFP) he helped to form three years ago.

In what analysts believed could be the start of a break up of Japan's biggest opposition party, veteran politician Michihiko Kano announced he would run against Ozawa in the NFP's presidential election Thursday.

Mr. Ozawa and Mr. Kano, once allies, are the only candidates.

The battle takes place amid widespread disaffection in the NFP about its failure to capitalise on voter anger at the handling of Japan's sagging economy by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

Mr. Kano, who has served as agriculture minister and as chief of the management and coordination agency, said Mr. Ozawa's leadership had been a failure because 40 NFP parliamentarians had defected to other parties in the two years of Mr. Ozawa's presidency.

He also pointed out that the NFP had lost last year's lower house election as well as a string of by-elections since then.

The party has 129 legislators in the 500-member lower house and 57 in the 252-seat upper house.

"People cannot find a party qualified to replace the LDP," Mr. Kano told a joint news conference with Mr. Ozawa where the pair announced their candidacies.

Mr. Ozawa appealed to the party to remain united for the good of the nation.

"The Japanese economy, particularly the finance system, has been increasingly slipping into a serious condition because the government has not taken any effective measures," Mr. Ozawa said. He said the NFP should consider a wholesale reorganisation, possibly even including changing its name and its middle-of-the-road policies, to attract supporters.

"Changing the name and platform means the denial of the party itself," Mr. Kano said. "That also means the party has done so poorly the party leader must take responsibility."

The election will be decided by 417 voters: The NFP's 175 parliamentarians and 242 representatives of grassroots supporters.

The election method differs significantly from the previous presidential race two years ago, in which anyone aged 18 or older was allowed to vote if he or she paid a \$10 fee.

If Mr. Kano wins, he would be the third leader of the NFP since it was formed in December 1994 through

an alliance of nine opposition parties.

Some analysts believe the loser of the election may leave with his supporters to form a new party, further weakening the NFP.

"Although the NFP is the largest opposition party, its influence has been steadily waning, allowing the LDP to dominate the political world," said Terumasa Nakanishi, professor of politics at Kyoto University.

"There is no longer any tension between the ruling and opposition camps. Therefore, ruling party politicians feel less pressure to seriously think about handling major issues," he added.

Mr. Kano and Mr. Ozawa, both aged 55, are former senior figures in the LDP.

They were part of a reformist group of politicians that split from the LDP to form coalition governments that broke the LDP's 38-year grip on power and ruled briefly in 1993 and 1994.

Political commentator Akira Hayasaka said there were dangers for the nation in an NFP split because it would take pressure off the Hashimoto government to solve Japan's economic crisis.

"It is possible that an NFP break-up will make the LDP feel more relaxed and easy-going," Mr. Hayasaka said. "That is a dangerous sign."

Muscovites give cold shoulder to city poll

MOSCOW (R) — Less than one in three of Moscow's seven million voters braved deep sub-zero temperatures Sunday to cast their ballots in a city election, giving the cold shoulder to attempts to convince them of its importance.

Mayor Yuri Luzhkov, widely seen as a contender for the Russian presidency in the year 2000, urged the capital's residents to take part in elections for the 35-seat city Duma, or parliament, saying it was an important body.

But an electoral official said preliminary figures showed the final turnout was only 29.36 per cent, just over the 25 per cent minimum level needed for the poll to be valid.

Just a month ago, a majority of residents questioned in a poll said they had not even heard of the parliament. The mayor's job was not up for election. Officials blamed the weather for the lack of interest. Temperatures hit 20 Celsius below freezing.

The election is important for Mayor Luzhkov because, despite his repeated denials, he is widely assumed to be aiming to run for president when Boris Yeltsin steps down. An opposition-dominated chamber might try to undermine him.

Mr. Luzhkov, who wields huge personal influence in the city and secured his own reelection last year with some 90 per cent of the vote, said he hoped the Duma would work for the good of Moscow and not get involved in political infighting.

"I am sure that we will get a Moscow city Duma which will not be caught up in politicking but in doing something concrete for the capital," he told reporters after casting his vote.

He said the number of candidates demonstrated the significance of the legislature.

More than 350 candidates are contesting the 35 seats which carry influence in a city where most of Russia's top leaders, wealth and foreign investment are concentrated.

Up to now liberals have dominated the parliament, a tsarist creation reinstated in 1993 after decades of Communist rule.

The main liberal groups have since fallen out, but are trying to mend fences in an electoral alliance to oppose Communist and other leftist candidates.

Elderly people, used to compulsory voting under Communism, tend to be the most active voters. Opinion polls show they support mainly leftist candidates.

Vote-counting machines were installed in the Mitino district in northeast Moscow as an experiment, although there, as elsewhere, votes continued to be counted by hand, with computers used only to tally the results, which were expected later Monday.

Staff, mums and babies at hospital in flesh-eating disease scare

MONTREAL (AFP) — The staff, young mothers and their babies at a north Montreal hospital are anxiously awaiting tests following the death of a woman from the so-called flesh-eating disease.

A 25-year-old mother died of the disease — officially known as Streptococcus group A — last week, just three days after giving birth, officials at the Hotel-Dieu Hospital said Sunday.

The woman's baby and another young mother who had just given birth were also found to be suffering from the disease, but quick and massive treatments of antibiotics saved both of them, said the hospital officials.

Throughout the weekend staff and recent patients at the maternity wing of the hospital were brought in for tests — "as a precautionary measure," said a spokeswoman for the hospital.

The results, however, won't be known until Monday or Tuesday.

Three years ago, the then opposition leader in the Canadian parliament, Lucien Bouchard, had much of a leg amputated when he fell victim to the disease.

Mr. Bouchard has since fully recovered, and is now the premier of Quebec. Equipped with an artificial leg, he walks with a limp and the use of a stick.

Over 1,000 Australian girls illegally sterilised

SYDNEY (R) — More than 1,000 intellectually disabled girls and young women have been illegally sterilised in Australia since 1991, according to a human rights report released Monday.

The report released by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission found that 1,045 sterilisation operations had been officially registered since 1991, yet only 17 of these were court approved.

After a 1992 court ruling involving a girl called Marion who was sterilised against her will, only a court can authorise sterilisation operations for a child. The ruling allows hysterectomies and tubal ligations only after less invasive

treatment has failed.

The only time a child can be sterilised without court approval is when the procedure is a by-product of surgery to treat a malfunction or disease.

But the report warned that the real number of sterilisation operations of intellectually disabled girls could be "several times" higher because it only counted operations that qualified for financial support under the Australian government's medical insurance system.

It said there was evidence the child sterilisation law was being "deliberately flouted," with operations disguised, due to the financial burden on families in seeking court approval.

Disability Discrimination

Commissioner Elizabeth Hastings said the report provided strong evidence of "disturbing breaches of human rights."

"This surgery is occurring far more often than those rare cases where it is required for urgent medical reasons," Ms. Hastings told reporters Monday.

"It seems clear that the practice of sterilisation is being undertaken without effective accountability and is happening unlawfully," Ms. Hastings said.

"I think it is a very serious problem. All people have a universal right to integrity of the body and illegal operations are a form of assault."

Ms. Hastings said sterilisation was wrongly seen by

some parents as a solution to menstruation problems faced by intellectually disabled girls, as well as unwanted pregnancies and mood swings.

"It doesn't solve a lot of the family-based problems relating with assisting the young woman with an intellectual disability with her ordinary bodily functions," she said.

"People do it because of problems they anticipate with menstruation and usually they don't know there are programmes in place that they can use."

"Some forms of sterilisation surgery will in fact have quite long-term physical health effects on women, osteoporosis and heart disease."

NATO to revise strategic concept

BRUSSELS (AFP) — NATO foreign ministers meeting Tuesday will launch the first formal revision of the alliance's Soviet-era strategic concept, to be adopted by NATO chiefs at the group's 50th anniversary summit in April 1999.

The meeting, which Wednesday opens up to NATO's neutral partners including Russia, will also formally decide on a new NATO-led mission in Bosnia and discuss plans for alliance enlargement.

The last revision of the strategic concept was in 1991, before the fall of the Soviet Union, and before the alliance's first peacekeeping operation, begun in Bosnia in 1995.

The new revision reflects the first major change following the cold war and the decision to admit three new members — the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

It will also take into account recently agreed reform in NATO's internal military

structure and the move to engage in cooperation programmes with Eastern nations — including the so-called Partnership for Peace, diplomats said.

The new strategic concept will also have to take account of the alliance's new, closer relationship with Russia, the emergence of a European defence identity within NATO and the first ever NATO peacekeeping operation.

The future concept "will have to confirm the main function of defence of members' territory, and update NATO's new missions like the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism," a diplomat said, stressing the changes seen since 1991.

"In 1991, we were still talking about the Soviet Union and could not imagine we would be undertaking a peacekeeping mission like that in Bosnia, which itself is outside NATO's traditional sphere," the diplomat said.

Taiwan official calls for peaceful exchanges with China

TAIPEI (AFP) — Vice President Lien Chan has called for Taiwan to seek peaceful and expanded exchanges with China and avoid confrontation due to political differences, a newspaper reported Monday.

Mr. Lien, who was forced to step down from the premiership in September over a crime wave, also said he would run for president in 2000 if endorsed by his ruling Kuomintang (KMT) party.

"Despite some noises here, there is no base for Taiwan to declare independence (from the mainland) and the conditions are not ripe, either for China to reunify with Taiwan," Mr. Lien told the United Daily News in an interview.

"So the best way is taking a 'no independence, no reunification' attitude while both sides strive for something positive instead of letting political confrontation cause instability."

Mr. Lien said both Taipei and Beijing should keep the peace and widen cross-strait exchanges.

Beijing has considered the island part of its territory since Communist troops drove nationalist forces here in 1949 at the end of a civil war.

The KMT government, while insisting on its sovereignty over the island, pledges to reunify with the mainland under "freedom, democracy and economic prosperity."



Court drawing dated Dec. 12, showing Ilich Ramirez Sanchez during the first day of his trial in Paris (AFP photo)

Police shut down gaming halls after reporter gets death threat

BEIJING (AFP) — Police in Fuzhou, in southeastern China, have launched a crackdown on gaming machines after death threats were made against a journalist who exposed the illegal gambling.

Some 18 electronic games halls were shut and 1,100 other halls in the city were to be checked in the city, the capital of Fujian province, the official China Daily said Monday.

To show their determination to combat the growth of gambling machines, most popular with young people, authorities Saturday publicly destroyed 390 slot machines and 773 related computer components, with a total value of three million yuan (\$360,000).

Gu Wei, a reporter with the Fuzhou Evening News, exposed the existence of these electronic machines, which are often hidden behind legal games, last month.

After the first article was published he received phone calls from someone

offering to pay him a portion of the earnings from the operation if he stopped his inquiries, but threatening to teach him a lesson if he persisted.

After he refused, the Chinese mafia fired shots at his house on Nov. 29, although no one was in the building at the time. Later that night he was warned he and his families would be the next target if he continued writing the articles.

Gambling, outlawed since the Communists came to power in 1949, has nevertheless been reappearing, along with prostitution, since the introduction of capitalist market reforms at the end of the 1980s, particularly in the rich coastal zones.

The government is trying to redirect the Chinese passion for gaming towards lotteries organised at the city and provincial level. The government is also seriously considering creating a game of Loto, modelled after those in France or Germany.

Carlos lashes out at court, his lawyer leaves as trial resumes

PARIS (AFP) — Carlos, the self-styled "professional revolutionary" hunted for a trail of terror in the 1970s and 1980s, lashed out at the court and his lawyer walked out as his murder trial went into its second day Monday.

Angered by the court decision to turn down his plea to cancel the trial and order his release, Carlos questioned the "integrity of the court" and denounced "the atmosphere of psychosis weighing" on the nine-person jury.

His lawyer, Isabelle Coutant-Peyre, walked out of the trial in protest at the court's failure to decide to call in witnesses who were present at a 1975 shoot-out in Paris, where two French policemen and a Lebanese informer were killed while trying to apprehend Mr. Carlos.

Held in solitary confinement in a French prison for the past three years, Carlos, at the opening of his weeklong trial last Friday, had called on the Paris Assize Court to annul the case on the grounds it was "illegal."

"I was kidnapped," he said Friday. "Legally I am not in France... I refuse to recognise the right of the French judiciary to judge me despite the respect I have for France."

The appeal has already been

overruled by international courts.

The 48-year-old Venezuelan-born defendant, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, was seized while living in hiding in Sudan in 1994 and was flown to France hooded, and in a sack, by French agents aided by Khartoum.

Presiding Judge Yves Corneloup said a separate plea from Carlos to disqualify the right of a group of victims of terrorism to act as civil plaintiffs in the murder trial would be examined later.

Pleading his cause in French, with a thick Spanish accent, the elegantly-dressed Carlos accused Mr. Corneloup of colluding with the group — known as "SOS Attentats" (SOS Attacks).

Carlos has accused the group's lawyer of being "a militant Zionist" and said the group itself was politically biased and had failed to help Palestinian victims of terror attacks in France.

The presiding judge, he said, had "an incestuous relationship" with the group of victims and should "stop the trial to avoid staining his robes with doubts on his integrity."

The bulky, gray-haired defendant, dressed in a navy jacket and white sports-shirt

with matching silk scarf, also regretted he was being portrayed as "a nasty terrorist, a bloodthirsty foreigner with a knife between his teeth."

The killings he is to answer for took place June 27, 1975m in a small apartment in the Rue Toullier in the Paris Latin Quarter, where three French officers investigating a Palestinian terrorist network were led after interrogating Carlos' friend Michel Moukharbal, a Lebanese.

Moukharbal and two of the officers — who were unarmed and members of France's DST counter-intelligence service — were shot at close range by Carlos while attempting to apprehend him. It was his closest call until his eventual capture in a career across Europe and the Middle East that is believed to have caused scores of deaths.

Carlos said the Rue Toullier incident was the result of "a plot by the Mossad", the Israeli secret service.

Ms. Coutant-Peyre's walk-out followed her earlier demand that the prosecution locate and bring to court the two men and one woman who were drinking with Carlos in the Paris apartment that night.

"If you plan to continue to judge this case without witnesses I will conclude that the

defence cannot exercise its rights nor carry out its work," she said.

On her announcement she was withdrawing as defence counsel, Mr. Corneloup said: "I am designating you as the court-appointed lawyer." But she replied: "I do not accept."

The pullout is expected to delay proceedings in the trial, and prompt the defendant to argue he is not getting a fair trial.

In France alone, Carlos is alleged to have killed 16 people and caused injury to more than 200.

Several months after the killings of the French officers, Carlos pulled off possibly his most audacious coup, an attack on a meeting of OPEC ministers in Vienna in which 70 people, including 11 ministers, were held hostage.

Born into a wealthy Marxist family, Carlos trained in guerrilla tactics with radical Palestinians and launched his career as the world's most wanted terrorist by fighting the Palestinian cause.

He later set up his own "terrorist international" with support from some Communist bloc and Arab nations, working with the likes of Germany's Red Army Faction and the Japanese Red Army.

North Nigerian youths protest detainee's death

LAGOS (R) — Hundreds of youths in Northern Nigeria, usually a heartland of support for military rule, marched in protest Sunday over the death of prominent political detainee Shehu Musa Yar'adua, newspapers said Monday.

They said the youths marched peacefully through the streets of Yar'adua's birthplace of Katsina carrying placards calling on military ruler General Sani Abacha to go and chanting anti-government slogans.

Yar'adua, a former military vice-president who was buried in Katsina last Tuesday, was considered by political analysts to be Gen. Abacha's most formidable opponent after detained presidential claimant Moshhood Abiola.

So far, most opposition to Gen. Abacha has come from Mr. Abiola's southwestern homeland and his Yoruba ethnic group, rather than from the Hausa-speaking north of Africa's most popu-

lous country.

The circumstances of 54-year-old Yar'adua's death have not yet been fully explained, although newspapers reported that it was due to inflammation of the liver.

Yar'adua was sentenced to death for coup plotting in 1995 at a secret trial of more than 40 people, including his former boss General Olusegun Obasanjo. The death sentence was later commuted to 25 years imprisonment.

Nigeria's latest round of

political crises began with the annulment of 1993 presidential elections, which Mr. Abiola is believed to have won.

Gen. Abacha has decreed new elections for next year, in which many pundits predict he will stand for the presidency.

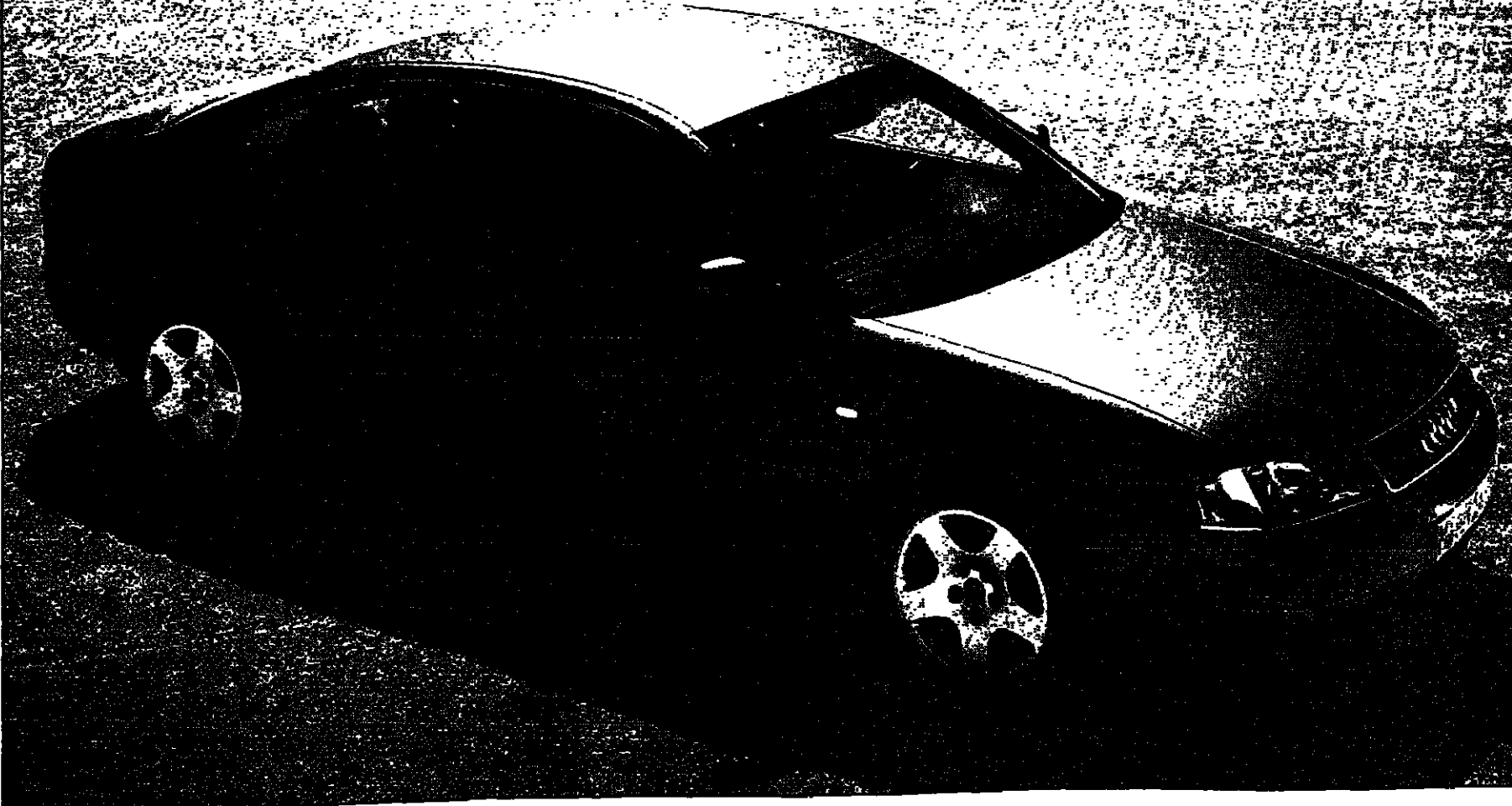
But the transition programme has been marred by limited enthusiasm in Nigeria and scepticism from western governments unhappy about the dozens of political detainees in Nigerian jails.

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Partnership for Jordan

AS EXPECTED the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali won the Lower House of Parliament's vote of confidence Monday after two days of gruelling deliberations during which fifty-five deputies took the floor to air their views. The margin with which government won (51 out of 78), however, suggests that the newly-elected House is anything but a rubber-stamp legislature for this or any other cabinet.

It would be simplistic to think that the way the deputies chose to cast their vote was purely in reaction to ample accusations, mainly by the opposition, that the House's composition was carefully orchestrated and manipulated by the regime. What is more realistic is to assume that the interventions and the ballots of the deputies genuinely reflected the mood in the country as a whole. In this sense the two-day parliamentary debate and the result of the confidence vote highlight the real issues that are likely to dominate the House's working agenda for the near future and beyond.

On top of what the Parliament would like to see, it appears, is a government that takes full responsibility for its actions. The prime minister's decision to adopt His Majesty King Hussein's Speech from the Throne as his government's programme, though unprecedented, did not go down well with the deputies. The representatives of the people would interact more satisfactorily with such detailed policy statements as those enunciated by Dr. Majali yesterday on each of the questions that our society at large is asking nowadays. As one parliamentarian after the other spoke on national and regional topics, the prime minister may have felt obliged to respond in kind on almost every point raised. For instance, the debate on the temporary press and publications law showed in no uncertain terms that the deputies will accept nothing less than a real compromise with the government over its separate articles. The government's contention that such law was needed as it would not hold water with the new House, and it was heartening to hear the prime minister extend an olive branch as far as a possible compromise was concerned when he left the final determination on the controversial legislation up to the Parliament itself.

On the Election Law, there appeared to be no clear-cut commitment to amend it in accordance with the wishes of the House. The fact that the prime minister placed a high premium on national security and stability may foreclose the adoption of certain elements that can completely fill existing gaps in our electoral process.

Dr. Majali did, however, offer sincere words of appreciation to all the speeches that were made in the two marathon sessions over the past two days and pledged to deal with them in good faith and in the most positive manner. Only through such cooperation in fact can we hope to establish a healthy, productive and democratic relationship between the legislative and executive branches of government.

Even though the parliamentary victory of Dr. Majali came as no surprise to most observers, it was still a hard won triumph which should dispel all notions that the next round of parliamentary life will be smooth sailing or lacking dynamism. The democratic process in our country is alive and kicking, it can be said. But now that the government has won the coveted Parliament's vote of confidence it remains to be seen how the lofty commitments it made will be translated into reality.

In the weeks and months ahead we will know more about the dynamic relationship between this government and Parliament. There are presumably going to be changes on the way, whether in the make-up of Dr. Majali's team or in political circumstances in the region.

Yesterday's vote was a defining moment for forging a new partnership. We hope it will serve the country well, whether the partners are government, government supporters or the opposition.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed al Fanek Monday cautioned Jordanians against escalating tension with Iraq, stressing that Jordan and Iraq are in need of each other under the present circumstances and in view of the common challenges. The anger of the Jordanian people as a result of the execution of the four Jordanians in Iraq has already sent a strong message to the Iraqi leadership but sentiments should not be escalated because any adverse development would have serious consequences on the interests of the two peoples, he said. The writer said Jordanians have to remember that the Iraqi government was applying its own rules against people smuggling badly needed items for Iraq which is not allowed to import under the present sanctions and the law is being applied to all people regardless of their nationality. All people including truck drivers realise that Iraq has its own laws including a law imposing capital punishment on smugglers, and if they disrespect the law they can face the consequences, noted the writer. He said Iraq is the most important country for Jordan, importing one-fifth of Jordanian products and supplying the Kingdom with its needs of oil at very competitive prices. At the same time, he said, Jordan is the sole outlet for Iraqis to the world, and the Kingdom is spearheading efforts worldwide to terminate the sanctions imposed on the Iraqi people. Dr. Fanek said Jordan must not give the enemies of Iraq a new weapon to use against the Iraqi nation.

The View from Fourth Circle

The first and last battle of the Arab-Israeli conflict

By Rami G. Khouri

OTTAWA, Canada — What is the single most difficult and contentious issue in the way of a comprehensive and permanent Arab-Israeli peace agreement? Jerusalem? Settlements? Sovereignty? Borders? Security? Recognition? Probably none of these. Reciprocal compromises on these issues are already underway — such as the Likud-led Israeli government's slow withdrawal from parts of the occupied West Bank and Gaza, the Israeli people's realistic attitude to the pluralistic and multi-faith nature of Jerusalem, and the Arafat-led Palestinian National Authority's cosmically patient attitude to Israeli settlements expansion in Arab lands occupied in 1967.

By quickly addressing and making some progress on these issues, the peace process, since Madrid in 1991, has highlighted the core of the conflict: the status and rights of the Palestinian refugees who were displaced and disenfranchised in 1947-48. The birth of modern Israel in 1948 largely resolved the historical problem of Jewish statelessness and vulnerability, but it created a new problem of the modern statelessness and vulnerability of the Palestinian Arabs whose land and homes were taken over by Israelis.

I have had the privilege of participating here in a two-day "stocktaking conference on Palestinian refugee research" that was organised by the very respected Canadian institution the International Development Research Center, with the input of Canadian and other scholars who are active in refugee issues. The meeting comprised Palestinians, Israelis, Jordanians, and several other nationalities, and came within the context of Canada's role as gavel holder of the refugees working group of the multilateral peace talks.

The experience was politically significant and instructive. It emphatically revealed two key points: a) how very far apart Israelis and Palestinians are on the refugees issue, and how little movement there has been on this issue, in contrast with the ongoing compromises on other key matters, and b) the central, powerful, existential importance of the refugees issue, symbolically and practically, to Israelis and Palestinians alike. We quickly encountered the Israeli consensus on refusing even to discuss the Palestinian refugees' "right of return" — legally, a vague and contested notion; historically, one

that has been repeatedly reaffirmed by United Nations resolutions that enjoy the exact same moral and legal weight as the 1947 U.N. resolution to partition Palestine into Israeli and Arab states; and politically, far and away the most important issue on the Palestinian side.

The Israeli refusal to discuss the matter betrays its very deep significance, to both Israelis and Palestinians. The Israeli writer Gideon Lowy recently called this "the most painful, unhealed wound standing between us and them" (Ha'aretz, August 17, 1997), a rare Israeli ability to mention the refugees' "right of return" in its full moral, legal and practical context. He made two crucial points that most Israelis are unable or unwilling to accept: that "recognition of the injustice that was done them [the Palestinian refugees] and true compensation for it are the human and political minimum to which these people are entitled, without which no true settlement can take place," and that "even the agreement to raise it [the right of return] for discussion implies recognition that the state of Israel was created on a basis that was partly unethical."

He also states (rightly) that talking of the right of return is utterly impractical as long as Israelis perceive this as undermining their state's basis for existence. Israelis in their sleep say that they will not negotiate "national suicide" by allowing millions of Palestinians to return to their homes in Jaffa and Haifa — an understandable and reasonable attitude from an Israeli perspective, to be sure, but one that also includes a fascinating, implicit recognition that Israel thrives on lands once inhabited by Palestinians whose legal and moral claims remain not only unresolved, but also unaddressed and, in Israel, largely unspoken, and perhaps even morally unmentionable.

The politically and historically important fact that recurs in any discussion of this issue, as occurred here in Ottawa this week, is that Israeli intransigence breeds a Palestinian mirror image — an echo from the harrowing memory of historical marginalisation and the demeaning quarters of national invisibility. Israel's vehement refusal even to discuss the Palestinians' right of return ("repatriation or compensation") automatically generates vehement Palestinian counter-claims to the right to return to

their homes and lands in Palestine (not "Israel," notice, but "Palestine," i.e., the Palestinians and Israelis are both saying: you don't see me, I don't see you). Israeli officials and private citizens offer to resolve the Palestinian refugee problem primarily outside of Palestine, in neighbouring Arab states and around the world, with heavy doses of economic rehabilitation and free trade: in response, Palestinians respond with dramatic new research showing that most Palestinian villages and lands that were abandoned in 1947-48 remain available for resettlement, and that more than 85 per cent of Israelis live on less than one-fifth of the land of Israel/Palestine (i.e., you send me east, I send you west).

This is another form of war — a war of words, ideas, hopes, concepts, memories, and threats. It is also the first and last battle of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Though mutually heroic, this confrontation is defined more by reciprocal audacity and denial than by sensitivity or political practicality, more by fear than courage, and more by bravado than by humility. It highlights the underlying problem, but does not point a way to its solution. The challenge before us is how to reconcile two equally valid rights — the Israeli right to statehood, security, and recognition, and the Palestinian right to self-determination, statehood, and repatriation-or-compensation. These mutual rights are emotionally difficult and politically traumatic — but they are not incompatible.

Scholars and politicians on both sides would do well to stop denying the legitimacy of the other, and instead to start suggesting how Palestinian and Israeli twin national legitimacies can be accommodated side-by-side. The core of Zionist national legitimacy was the reconstitution of a sovereign Jewish majority in its ancestral homeland, which has been achieved. The core of Palestinian national legitimacy is to achieve the same right and goal, alongside and not in place of the existing Jewish state. The "right of return" for the Palestinians does not necessarily mean the end or the negation of the state of Israel. Thoughtful Israelis and Arabs should take the time and make the effort to explore how this could be achieved, so that we may walk securely and with dignity into the future, rather than to keep wandering, frightened and blind, in the darkness of the past.

'U.S. must normalise relations with Israel'

By Khalil E. Jahshan

IN ITS haphazard attempt at resuscitating the on-again off-again Middle East peace negotiations, the Clinton administration has called on Israel to take a "time-out" on its relentless building of Jewish settlements in occupied Palestine. The United States made its appeal to Israel for the sake of rescuing the American-sponsored peace talks and not on the basis of a principled position against Israeli settlement activities. The Israeli response has been a swift and unequivocal "No!"

Notwithstanding the fate of the peace process or that of American interests in the region, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has reiterated over the past few weeks his government's intention not to heed the American appeal by President Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to temporarily halt the construction and expansion of settlements on Arab-owned lands.

With his characteristic arrogance and warped sense of logic and symmetry, Netanyahu declared that settlements are "a non-issue" and that Israeli agreements with the Palestinians, namely the Oslo accords, "don't include any limitation whatsoever on settlements." Furthermore, the Israeli prime minister voiced a new demand calling for curbs on Palestinian construction of homes on Arab-owned lands in such areas as Bethlehem and Qalqilia currently controlled

by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

What makes an American client state like Israel so adamant and so successful at defying U.S. wishes with such impunity? Unfortunately, most of the blame lies on the American side.

political leadership which lacks the moral courage to stand up for American interests. Mr. Netanyahu and his successors will remain at liberty to defy their American benefactor.

Second, inherent contradictions in American policy vis-a-vis Israel, in general,

...so long as the United States suffers from spineless political leadership which lacks the moral courage to stand up for American interests, Mr. Netanyahu and his successors will remain at liberty to defy their American benefactor.

First and foremost, the American sense of priorities is out of whack, to say the least. As Philip Geyelin wrote in his Washington Post column more than 13 years ago: "The problem is not so much with Israel, which has an admirable way of attending to its own security interests by putting them first, even when they work at cross-purposes with U.S. interests. The real problem is with the United States, which, by contrast, is all too often ready to subordinate its security interests to the will of Israel." Indeed, so long as the United States suffers from spineless

and towards the settlement issue, in particular, have left the impression with Israeli leaders that the United States is not serious. Mindful of the constant and irresponsible retreat in the American characterisation of Jewish settlements over the years from "illegal" to an "impediment to peace" to "unhelpful" to "legal, but not right now," Mr. Netanyahu sees that as a green light to proceed forward with his settlement plans to the detriment of the peace process and U.S. credibility and interests in the region. In addition, Netanyahu's defiance is fur-

ther strengthened by such remarks as that uttered recently by Secretary Albright when she stated that "you don't use pressure tactics when dealing with friends." Translated into Israeli political jargon, Albright's statement means that the Clinton administration will not confront or use serious pressure on Israel regardless of Israeli excesses for fear of domestic backlash in the American Jewish community. Furthermore, with all due respect to Mrs. Albright, the U.S. does routinely apply pressure on friends and foes alike, including close allies who are much more significant to American national interests than the Jewish state. A case in point is the Clinton administration's recent dealings with Japan, France, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, just to name a few.

The time has come for the United States to "normalise" its relations with Israel. We cannot afford to continue this love affair with Israel, right or wrong. As George Washington once wrote: "The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest."

The writer is president of the National Association of Arab Americans, a foreign policy lobbying group based in Washington, DC. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

'Shed the obsession'

To the editor:

IN READING your latest editorial: "The stakes are high for all" (Jordan Times, Dec. 9), I, as a Westerner, was struck once again by your obsession with the United States, and that the U.S. "should do something" about Israel. This obsession has been, is, and will continue to be totally counterproductive. It is, in fact, a dead end. American policy towards the Middle East is driven by AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee] and other domestic Jewish lobbies that are fanatically pro-Israel, as is President Clinton himself. Add to that the key officials in the American administration: Madeleine Albright for foreign affairs and William Cohen for defence, are both strongly pro-Israel, and it is clear that it is impossible for the Americans to be neutral mediators in the Middle East.

In addition, the American public is increasingly Arabophobic and Islamophobic, this prejudice being fuelled by America's popular press. Read only the last few issues of Time, Newsweek, Herald Tribune and other journals and newspapers, to get the full impact of these phobias passing off as "news" in the U.S. Add to that the ignorance of reality in the Middle East by America's Congress, and the picture is stark and hopeless for the Islamic states. In the U.S. today, it is truly "the blind leading the blind" in the Middle East.

The Americans' presence and dominant influence, unfortunately accepted by too many Arab states, is actually part of the problem — and not the solution to the Palestinian question and other problems of the Middle East. You have to go no further than read the article on the back page of this newspaper on the same day as the editorial to see this clearly: Albright, once again, stated that the "U.S. would not dictate Israeli W. Bank troop withdrawal." No American pressure on Israel, Period.

It gets tiresome reminding readers that the U.S. has only three primary interests in the Middle East: 1. cheap oil; 2. Israel; and 3. political and military dominance. Full stop. No Arab states, no Palestine, no Muslim refugees, no peace except on Israel's terms — nothing of benefit to Arab and Muslim states. For Arab states to appeal to the Americans is useless, and if they seemingly give something, it has to be cleared by Israel, and represents a few crumbs from the American table — as compared to the torrent of aid, military hardware and cash that is poured into Israel on a daily basis.

LETTERS

If the Muslim states wish to improve their situation, I would suggest strongly that they throw away their American begging bowl and develop some allies who really have their interests at heart, as a counterweight to the overwhelming American influence. Distance yourselves greatly from America, go to who your real friends are, and start building a new coalition for your own interests. The European Union, Russia, China and the U.N. are a good place to start. Too much time has been wasted on appeals for American fairness and justice. After years and years, the results are negative — Lebanon and Syria still occupied, Iraq invaded and now occupied, Palestinian lands disappearing by the day, Muslims imprisoned and killed and exiled. All done with American approval in conjunction with its allies: Israel and Turkey.

No, your children deserve far better than this, and are getting increasingly tired of the constant howling to American dictates — Fight your real — and external — enemies. The alternative is, in the future, to fight your own people and your own children.

Dr. Hendrik S. Weiler
 Amman

Good news from Tehran

To the editor:

THE ISLAMIC conference held recently in Tehran is successful in many aspects. HRH Crown Prince Hassan's participation in the conference helped reveal the brighter side of Islam to the world. His speech was the right response to the vicious campaign waged against the Muslim religion. The Crown Prince's call for setting up a Zakat fund is a reminder of the vivid image of the philanthropic facets of Islam. In addition, Jordan has succeeded in breathing new life into the cool relationship between Jordan and Iran, genuinely reflecting Jordan's willingness to further develop bilateral ties, politically and economically. Iran's release of two Jordanian prisoners of war is a goodwill gesture that received so much regard and appreciation from all Jordanians.

Mazen Tamjini
 Amman

Incident not to pass lightly

To the editor:

THE FOUR Jordanians who were executed in Iraq committed a minor violation in attempting to smuggle spare parts out of Iraq. They violated a man-made law in hopes of making a small profit, such a violation must never be considered a crime. Any crime no matter how severe should never be punishable by death, since no man has the right to take another man's life. I am proud of our government for condemning such actions, and for waiting for what might develop in the coming few days.

The role of government is to protect its nationals wherever they are. Last week's incident should not pass by lightly. As a citizen I demand full protection from my government and urge it not to deal with this matter lightly, for it will not go away.

Firas Alashash
 Amman

Call for condemnation

To the editor:

I AM a Jordanian living in the U.S. and have read your article about the killing of the four Jordanians in Iraq. I am absolutely outraged and shocked. This action is a travesty to all mankind and especially the Arab people all over the world. Iraq should be ashamed of itself. Rather than protecting its Arab brothers, Iraq has chosen an inhumane act of punishment. The leaders and judges there should be condemned for their actions. It is a shame that something like this can be allowed to happen in the Arab World. It is even worse than what the Jewish people are doing to our brothers and sisters in Palestine. Even my nine-year-old son is outraged. I truly feel that all Arab countries should condemn Iraq and its leaders for this terrible act and its leaders should feel pain, like the mothers and families of these Jordanian men must be feeling. May the Arab World never again experience such a crime.

Wardi M'Sallam
 Jacksonville, Florida

Deputies focus on press law, economic concerns in vote of confidence statements

Following is the continuation of highlights of speeches given by Lower House of Parliament members during discussions on the vote of confidence motion in Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali's government.

Youssef Shreideh
(Koura District)

"The government has caused an imbalance in the Kingdom's press establishment through the implementation of the Press and Publications Law.

"The government has increased the level of unemployment by laying off a number of journalists and transferring the ownership of papers from journalists to capitalists and wealthy individuals.

"Several laws have been introduced by the government that do not serve the press.

"Many well-known and renowned poets and writers have fled their homeland because of lack of confidence and appreciation."

Mohammad Azaideh
(Madaba)

"I propose a national media plan to serve all citizens and to protect Islamic norms and morals.

"I also urge the government to reconsider the draft press and publications law and to stop selling public institutions to the private sector under the name of privatisation.

"The State Security Court should be granted further power and authority.

"We have heard promises from the government to decrease the level of unemployment, but the reality is quite the opposite, since unemployment is increasing."

Saleh Shawatah
(Irbid)

"I will begin by saying that I will be committed to the people who voted for me. I believe that the people's will emanates from the will of God and that the nation serves as the source of authority. I also stress that there is need for respecting the provisions of the Constitution and for respecting all religious and legislative."

"The professional and trade unions are national institutions and in Jordan there are more than 100,000 professionals who enjoy their services. I believe that the time has come for the government to view these associations as partners in shouldering responsibility and not as adversaries to be eliminated."

"This government, which chose to stay aloof from the public by not caring for several issues of concern, has lowered the ceiling of freedoms. This government has not drawn up an overall programme and is not able to work out a plan for reviving the economy, raising the ceiling of freedoms, respecting human rights, or enhancing national unity."

Mansour Ben Tarif
(Karak)

"My speech is on behalf of members of the Democratic Solidarity Bloc who are: Barjas Hadid, Hammad Abu Zeid, Noman Ghweiri, Fawzi Tueimeh, Raji Haddad, Ghazi Fayed, Saleh Jbour, Bakhit Hajaya, Riyadh Sarateh, Nayef Mawla, Munir Sobar, Galeb Zou'bi, Fawwaz Zou'bi, Sami Khasawneh, and Abdullah Zurikat.

"In spite of its scarce resources, Jordan has achieved concrete development and progress in various facets of life.

"The Jordanian citizen looks forward to further economic benefits that meet his aspirations and demands.

"Jordanians have the right to live in freedom and live a dignified life in a democratic climate, where people are respected and appreciated.

"Unemployment, poverty, and economic stagnation, as well as corruption, cannot be confronted without sincere government efforts."

Ayed Adaleh
(Karak)

"I have no doubt that our

country suffers from complex and chronic problems despite the continued efforts to find solutions for them.

"We are facing higher rates of poverty, a shrinking middle class, modest levels of social services, stifling of freedoms, and administrative, social, and political corruption.

"Furthermore, the Kingdom is facing isolation due to circumstances on the Arab and international fronts and is facing the hegemony of the U.S. and Israel at a time when the government's policies have been favourable to them, which has been so since the end of the Gulf war.

"This situation did not materialise as a result of the performance of a certain government but rather as an outcome of successive government policies over a long period of time.

"In the political arena, this government has introduced a law that cancels people's right to expression and thought and has enacted the one-person, one-vote electoral system, which restricts the rights of people in the parliamentary process.

"The government has infringed upon society's civil institutions, including the unions, political parties, clubs, societies, and popular organisations.

"The country faces bureaucracy, weak public administration, unemployment, and corruption of every kind. These have characterised both the public and private sectors, thus endangering the country's present and future.

"We demand that:

1. The government introduce a new and modern elections law that can guarantee freedoms. The public should participate in its formation under judicial supervision.

2. The government introduce a new press and publications law guaranteeing freedom of the press without any legal or financial restrictions, so that the media can serve as a watchdog over the government's performance.

3. The government guarantee human rights and public freedoms.

4. The government pass legislation that can guarantee public and political freedoms."

Adnan Aqrabawi
(Zarqa)

"The democratic march that Jordan is embarking on now requires raising the ceiling of public freedoms and freeing the press. This will allow watchful eyes to look out for the security of the nation."

Ra'd Bakri
(Amman 3rd)

"The citizen's life has become harsh. He is no longer capable of paying for food, medicine, water, or the electricity bill. All of this is due to the increased cost of living. Inflation is on the rise and you must not forget the issues of paying for housing, comprehensive medical insurance, and education.

"All of this makes it necessary that our honourable government formulate a credible agenda that deals genuinely with the issues at hand.

"This agenda should include equal employment opportunities and raising the salaries and pensions of civil workers and military personnel."

Ghazi Fayed
(Central Badia)

"We agree with the regime that any government loyal to its main principles will work on achieving justice and equality in society.

"With all due respect, I did not find these things in the current government. It lacks the harmony necessary for effective team work and the efficiency essential for placing the right man in the right position. All of this made the government incapable of fulfilling our country's aspirations.

"Was it not this very government that issued temporary laws in the aftermath of dissolving the 12th Parliament, although there was no need to do so? Did it not turn a deaf ear to all criticism that followed that action? Was it not the government that wit-

nessed serious human rights violations during its administration and prevented citizens from speaking up and defending their rights?"

Ahmad Ennah
(Ajloun)

"I suggest that our council vote on the following: We grant the government a vote of confidence due to the fact that there is no reason to repeat the discussion of the Speech of the Throne, which has become the official government statement. Our response to it yesterday should be sufficient."

Nash'at Hamarneh
(Madaba)

"I propose the following points:

1. Respecting the constitution and regarding it as the reference for any laws.

2. Raising the ceiling of freedoms and creating a modern elections law.

3. Creating a modern press and publications law that does not allow transgression of human intellect.

4. Putting a stop to the privatisation of public institutions, which allows these establishments to fall into the hands of foreign investors.

5. Fighting corruption and holding all those who squander public funds accountable.

6. Maintaining our national and nationalistic values.

7. Putting a limit on any increases of tuition fees at universities and educational institutions.

8. Creating a professional teachers organisation and a general Jordanian students association.

9. Refraining from interfering with association policies requiring obligatory membership.

10. Granting the rights of women in inheritance, including social security and retirement funds.

11. Stopping all forms of normalization with the Zionists and strengthening Jordanian-Arab ties."

Saleh Jabour
(Northern Badia)

"The conditions of all the bedouins in the Kingdom are very severe. Unfortunately, the policies and decisions of previous governments have played a part in worsening the status of livestock owners, which comprise the majority of Jordanian bedouins."

"I do not oppose for the sake of opposition. I oppose because I am loyal to His Majesty the King and to the country, to myself, and to my tribe Bani Sakher. I feel great sorrow for my tribe, which has suffered great injustices because of its sacrifices. These have left our graduates and intellectuals behind, while government favourites held positions distributed unfairly."

No'man Ghweiri
(Zarqa)

"Concerning internal affairs, there are some economic and social challenges that must be dealt with seriously and effectively. We must find stable strategies that deal with them.

"I call upon the government to reconsider many of its economic and social policies in order to bring relief to the citizens, help underprivileged classes, improve the living conditions of all citizens, improve general health conditions, and formulate a comprehensive medical insurance plan."

Ali Abul Ragheb
(Amman 3rd)

"We look forward to a consistent official policy that mirrors directives and obligations relevant to the unity of the nation, in particular, the issue of public office appointments, in which the right person would be put in the right position.

"The public is watching eagerly for an elections law that is civilised, modern, and developed in a way that achieves justice and equality between citizens and takes into consideration adequate representation, abolishment of unnecessary routine, the simplification of voter and

candidacy registration, and voting.

"[Concerning] professional association's law, we are waiting for a law or a package of legislation that would strengthen associations, raise professional standards and reform associations so as to allow them to become a pillar of a modern state...[instead of] empty associations, content and marginalising their role through 'membership obligation'.

"The Press and Publications Law, which was referred to the [House's] national guidance committee, is an insufficient law that confines press freedom and newspaper publications and sets unjustified restrictions. Its provisions should be reconsidered to enable a new law to be enacted that guarantees press freedoms, on a condition that journalists do not intrude on people's private lives.

"Is the government's clear regression concerning democratic gains and legislation intended? Does this government believe democracy has become a threat to this nation?"

"We emphasise the importance of the judiciary's independence and its fortification against interference from the government or any other party.

"We, in Jordan, need our commitment to the economic reform programme, as agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), to be closer to the national Jordanian vision. We must also consider the dimensions and effects of adopted social and economic policies on the current realities and the future."

Mijeh Sqour
(Koura District)

"We have the right to ask our refined government to respond to the demands of its people.

"In the political arena, [we call for] the embodiment of national unity, the enhancement of confidence through the cohesion of our internal fronts, working towards Arab and Islamic unity, [and] the preservation of the unique relationship between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples."

"Priority should be given to the foundation of an 'agricultural insurance' fund to aid farmers in cases of natural disasters."

Khalil Atiah
(Amman 1st)

"As we meet to discuss granting the government a vote of confidence...I wonder, is it really worthy of our confidence?"

"Has the government approached Parliament in a manner suggesting that all has been said and done, and that the vote of confidence is

something to be taken for granted?"

"Has the government combated corruption without mercy, and in a serious and successful fashion?"

"Has [the government] undertaken economic policies to overcome the escalating economic crisis?"

"Has [the government] achieved social equity and equality between the sons and daughters of this nation?"

"With all due respect to the prime minister and some of his ministers, I believe that the remaining members of the Cabinet are unable to proceed with the programmes and policies that will lead to the advancement of this nation."

"Granting the government my vote of confidence is tied to what [I] have mentioned."

Mohammad Bani Hani
(Irbid)

"Did the government put forward in a detailed statement how it intends to lead this country, according to what was asked for in the Quran?"

"We are an Arab and Islamic nation — this is our identity, which should be made clear. So our institutions, rules, laws, curricula, and media should be directed towards feeding and strengthening such an identity."

"Citizens complain of poverty, unemployment, and the continuous increase of prices."

"Does the government have solutions for the unemployed? Are there investment projects distributed in all constituencies and on an equal basis?"

"We believe in expanding the foundation of democracy, but total freedom does not exist anywhere in the world. It should be guarded in a way to prevent it from trespassing on the freedom of others, or overriding the limits of the Arab Islamic nation."

"Therefore, we should not fear guaranteeing press freedoms. Rather, we should

reconsider the Press and Publications Law in a way that guarantees sufficient freedom of press, opinion, and dialogue in a frank, safe environment.

"Finally, I thank all my colleagues for their efforts and particularly I want to thank the prime minister, who secured fair and free parliamentary elections."

Samir Khasawneh
(Irbid)

"The most chronic issue facing us is unemployment, which has been aggravated over the past decade. Its reason, as I see it, lies in the absence of a balance between educational policy on the one hand and the community's needs for labour and services on the other.

"As the problem of poverty is becoming worse, we have to take into consideration the negative impacts resulting from the application of economic reforms. I call on the government to expand health insurance to cover all people. I also call for promoting the work of development funds."

"I urge Parliament to work with the government in enacting laws and regulations that safeguard women's rights and women's participation in all social and economic activities."

Ahmad Ajarmeh
(Amman 5th)

"I demand that the prime minister explain why all the Ajarmeh tribes in the Naqur district have been denied appointments to the main positions of the state, including such posts as ministers, secretaries general, ambassadors, and governors."

"The Naqur district has many people qualified to assume high positions and the time has come to give them a chance to serve their nation and King."

Rida Haddad
(Ajloun)

"I demand that the government build its pan-Arab and international relations on the principle of reciprocity and

deal with other nations on the basis of their positions vis-à-vis our economic interests.

"I also demand that other people's views and human rights in general be respected."

Ahmad Abbadi
(Amman 5th)

"Government policies, and some members of the current Cabinet who supervised the 1993 and 1997 elections, have deprived a large sector of the Jordanian people of their right to vote and even to boycott elections."

"I demand that the government take into consideration our Arab and Islamic identity and adopt a strategic policy for Jordan to work within Arab and Islamic frameworks."

"The Israeli government wants to steal everything and does not want to return anything. The Israelis do not even want to abide by their commitments and accords signed with others. They have adopted expansionist policies to establish what is called 'greater Israel'."

"As for the Elections Law, I ask the government to subdivide each constituency into units and allocate one seat per unit."

Amjad Majali
(Karak)

"What has the government achieved in its fight against bloated administration and corruption? The government knows that these two stand in the way of productive institutions."

"Is the government able to convince [members of Parliament] that it has appointed the right man in the right position?"

"Can the government present [Parliament] with its plan and a scientific agenda for dealing with the dilemmas of poverty, unemployment, and the rising cost of living?"

Bassam Haddadin
(Zarqa)

"The formation of a new government that reflects the will of society is a natural

outcome of [the Nov. 4] elections.

"In reality, we find ourselves faced with the same government that was formed for supervising elections, and as such came to be known as the 'one purpose government.' The government now takes the responsibility of redrafting the laws of democracy upon itself."

"Above all else, the government requests a vote of confidence from Parliament on the basis of the Speech from the Throne, which talked briefly and generally about directives that are not under dispute. However, disputes and differences in opinion occur when the details, mechanisms, and principles behind the execution of these directives is debated."

"The government drafted a temporary Press and Publications Law in haste, without considering the objections of members of Parliament or the press."

"Does the government want to enhance civil society's institutions or does it want to destroy them? Professional associations are civil society's most important institutions. Drafting a modern law to regulate the affairs of these associations demands their participation."

"As for the Press and Publications Law, we voiced our objection upon its issue...The government wants a solution to its own problems regarding the press. Instead of thinking of imposing limitations on the press, the government should consider a modern press law to face the information revolution and [Jordan's] entrance into the 21st century, as well as ways of forming mechanisms to enhance the profession of journalism and its ethics."

"The middle and lower class, representing the majority of our society, are the ones who have paid the price of economic readjustment."

"I propose the formation of a coalition government."

See Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali's reply to the deputies on page 3.

Majali's government wins House vote of confidence

(Continued from page 1)

Parliament's inaugural session on Nov. 29, in line with the Constitution.

Many deputies, however, expressed concern that the Speech did not detail clear policies on how the government planned to cope with day-to-day life of the 4.5 million Jordanians and as such indirectly prevented them from constructively criticising the policies.

Dr. Majali is expected to reshuffle the Cabinet any time soon, now that he has won the vote of confidence.

No date for the change has been set but many expect it to take place after Parliament endorses the 1998 state budget later this month.

Officials have not ruled out the inclusion of several deputies and senators in Dr. Majali's new line-up after King Hussein said on Saturday the issue of lawmakers serving in government was not decisively resolved.

The following deputies voted against the government:

Abdul Majeed Aqtash (Amman's Second Dis-

trict), Mohammad Kouz (Amman's Second), Khalil Haddadin (Amman's Third), Mohammad Bani Hani (Irbid), Mohammad Bataineh (Irbid), Saleh Sha'wat (Irbid), Mohammad Ra'fat (Balqa), Ayed Adaleh (Karak), Nazih Ammaren (Karak), Basam Haddadin (Zarqa), Mohammad Oran (Tafilah), Mohammad Azaydeh (Madaba), Nasha'at Hamarneh (Madaba), Saleh Jbour (Central Badia) and Ghazi Fayed (Central Badia).

The following abstained: Ali Abul Ragheb (Amman's Third District), Lutfi Barghouti (Amman's Third), Ahmad Ajarmeh (Amman's Fifth), Asaf Asaf (Amman's Fifth), Abdel Razzaq Tbaishat (Irbid), Youssef Shreideh (Kora), Samir Kavar (Balqa), Khaled Tarawneh (Karak), Hmoud Khalayleh (Zarqa), Abdel Karim Dughmi (Mafraq), azem Mommani (Ajloun) and Ahmad Annab (Ajloun).

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Dubai turns into magnet for Iraqi business at expense of Jordan

DUBAI (AFP) — The Gulf emirate of Dubai has turned into a magnet for Iraqi businessmen at the expense of Jordan, the traditional route for Baghdad's imports.

A total of 102 companies with Iraqi capital have registered this year with the Dubai Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The Iraqi businessmen, most of whom have moved to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from Jordan, are trading in food, car spare parts, tyres, and electrical or electronic goods.

Jordan has since the 1980s been the main transit route for Iraq's exports and imports. During the Iran-Iraq war, the Red Sea was safer because of

attacks on shipping in the Gulf.

Since the U.N. embargo imposed on Baghdad because of its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Jordan has been Iraq's only link with the outside world.

But relations between Baghdad and Amman have soured recently and Jordan expelled seven Iraqi diplomats last week to protest the execution of four Jordanians in the Iraqi capital.

The start of U.N.-authorised imports of humanitarian goods under the "oil-for-food" accord launched in December 1996 has triggered a sharp increase in maritime links between Iraq and other Gulf ports.

Dubai, whose ports are the busiest in the Gulf,

has gained the most.

"Our trade with the UAE has been on the rise for the past three years. It is now at an unprecedented level, even including before the embargo," Commerce Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh said during a visit to the Emirates last week.

He said President Saddam Hussein wanted the UAE to be Iraq's main transit point for imports after the U.N. sanctions are lifted, in recognition of Abu Dhabi's support for ending the embargo.

Trade between the two countries was running at an estimated \$400 million this year, close to last year's level, he said.

But Wadih Hanzal, an Iraqi trader who settled in Dubai in 1995, said the

figure was too conservative.

"From what I know of the activities of Iraqi businessmen in Dubai, I can say that the figure is much higher than \$400 million," he said.

An Arab banker based in Dubai, asking not to be named, said Iraqi traders had been involved in "several hundred million dollars" worth of business in the last few months alone.

According to the chamber of commerce, Iraq has climbed to 19th position for Dubai's vital reexport trade this year, from 80th position in 1995.

The number of companies with Iraqi capital registered at the Dubai Chamber of Commerce

reached 185 in December, compared to 83 in 1996.

Most of the Iraqi companies were previously based in Jordan, said Mr. Hanzal, adding that Dubai was his choice because of its financial and transport facilities.

He added that the Iraqi government was allowing importers based abroad to be paid in dollars, through the central bank.

Most of the trade from Dubai to Iraq is carried on wooden boats called dhows, from one of the emirate's four ports.

Bakht Mohammed, an Emirati trader, said he has been sending seven to eight dhows a month to Iraq, each loaded with 500-600 tonnes of food.

He has suspended the

operations for the past two months before the low purchasing power in Iraq, but Mr. Mohammed expects high returns in the long run, after sanctions.

Iraq has asked to open a trade office in Dubai, although ties between Abu Dhabi and Baghdad have been frozen since the 1991 Gulf War, according to another trader.

In 1990, Iraq issued threats against both Kuwait and the UAE for busting their OPEC output quotas and depressing oil prices at a time when Baghdad badly needed the funds for reconstruction after its 1980-1988 war against Iran.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If you're going to travel, be prepared for a lot of congestion out there. You might want to go by the route you used to take years ago. It could turn out to be a faster route to wherever you're going. And the time you save will make the trouble well worth it.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You don't like changes much. You like things to stay as they are. That will be a challenge today. A woman will be an unexpected ally. You two don't agree on much, but today you'll have a lot in common. If you ask for money to bring more certainty into your life, you just might get it. Protect what you've got in savings. That's a rare commodity this time of year.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Travel should go very well today. It'll be even better if you're with your mate and you're going to visit somebody you love. A friend could drop over unexpectedly, however. If you know someone who's liable to do that, let him or her know you won't be around. Either that or get home early.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) There might be controversy at work. You're expecting things to go one way and they could turn out the opposite. Keep that in mind, but don't get distracted. There's something on your desk that needs to be handled. If you put it off much longer, you could incur a late fee, and you hate that.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A plethora of old jokes will show up today, some of them older than the hills. Milton Berle thought these jokes were stale. But the people at the party you're going to will be full of them. Maybe you could take a few seltzer bottles and some cream pies with you. Just kidding!

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) This is a marvellous time for cleaning up old messes and re-establishing old values. So dig out all your favourite memorabilia and decorate the house with it. You'll be using the Mercury retrograde condition to its utmost potential. And have a great time while you're at it.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You're on a roll again. You're intelligent, charming and good-looking. You're finding it easier to learn new information, and you're also picking up old ideas you missed the first time around. The more you know about your past, the better you're able to chart your future.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Would it benefit the family to have a computer in the home? Or a cellular phone? You don't usually go in for that sort of thing. In this case, however, the price will be so good you'll be tempted to give it a try. Go ahead. Get something that will make your life easier. Your attitude will improve, too. This will be beneficial in more ways than you realise.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Listen to coaching from a parent or someone else of the older generation. This person has your best interests at heart. There's also good advice coming from a person your own age. You're interested in achieving the same goals, so why not work for them together?

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You hit the deck running first thing this morning. There's more to do than you could possibly get accomplished in one day. Actually, you set it up this way. You've been putting off lots of things all week. You've been saying you could handle them on Saturday. Well, here is Saturday! Don't you just hate it?

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You're so popular, you might have trouble fitting all the invitations into your schedule. You may have to figure out ways to double these things up. Get people together at one place so you don't have to drive all over town. You could meet at a favourite restaurant. That's a nice way to have a party. Nobody has to clean up afterwards.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) The house is full of people, presents and wrapping paper. The old folks and the young ones are having all sorts of arguments, but everybody seems to be smiling. It's a marvellous time for working out old misunderstandings. None of them seem very important anymore.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SUBSIDIARY											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 15/12/1997											
LAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	F / E	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE		
PRICE	SHARE			SHARES	SHARES	TRADING	PRICE	PRICE			
2.340	1.680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	18	102350	186345	1.85	1.84	-0.01	
3.600	1.800	BANK OF JORDAN	E	0.00	2	1000	1850	1.81	1.80	-0.01	
1.200	0.890	KID. EAST INV. BK.	E	0.00	1	250	285	1.20	1.14	-0.06	
2.680	1.120	INDUSTRIAL INV. BK.	E	0.00	27	16725	30054	1.77	1.78	+0.01	
5.300	4.600	THE HOUSING BK.	E	0.00	3	5840	29901	5.12	5.12	0.00	
4.180	1.850	JOR. KAWAT BANK	E	0.00	3	108	213	2.00	1.99	-0.01	
3.990	1.710	JOR. GULF BANK	E	0.00	5	3520	2498	1.71	1.71	0.00	
4.050	2.380	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	E	0.00	10	1651	3962	2.40	2.40	0.00	
3.900	2.360	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	E	0.00	1	150	368	2.36	2.45	+0.09	
2.350	2.180	JOR. INV. FID. BANK/MSV	E	0.00	2	400	940	2.35	2.35	0.00	
1.840	0.870	BEIT AL-JAL (BEITWA)	E	0.00	1	350	305	0.87	0.87	0.00	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 236.60 %CHG: -0.01 73 132344 256719											
2.050	1.390	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	E	0.00	5	3300	6742	2.03	2.01	-0.02	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 118.31 %CHG: -0.11 5 3300 6742											
2.050	1.580	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	E	0.00	3	125	242	1.94	1.94	0.00	
6.100	3.580	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	E	0.00	2	504	18409	1.60	1.65	+0.05	
1.550	0.930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	E	0.00	4	500	342	1.04	1.05	+0.01	
0.810	0.470	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	E	0.00	5	3750	1913	0.49	0.51	+0.02	
1.680	1.130	KID. EAST INV. BK.	E	0.00	1	250	285	1.20	1.14	-0.06	
3.900	2.800	ARAB INTL. INV. BK.	E	0.00	6	1150	4447	3.81	3.88	+0.07	
1.050	0.740	JORDAN EXPRAT. INV.	E	0.00	2	2500	2250	0.90	0.90	0.00	
2.230	1.630	UNIFIED CO.	E	0.00	1	500	835	1.67	1.67	0.00	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 108.13 %CHG: +0.55 24 14171 29270											
1.150	0.930	ATTAQESH	E	0.00	2	4000	4600	1.15	1.15	0.00	
4.450	3.000	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	E	0.00	12	422812	1276837	3.00	3.02	+0.02	
7.050	5.570	ARAB FOYAH CO.	E	0.00	2	100	625	6.30	6.25	-0.05	
11.160	9.200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	E	0.00	15	1457	15071	10.38	10.35	-0.03	
1.410	1.050	WOOLLEN INDUSTRIES	E	0.00	3	500	586	1.07	1.04	-0.03	
3.260	1.330	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AGR.	E	0.00	3	1500	2100	1.45	1.40	-0.05	
4.700	3.440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	E	0.00	6	2354	10473	4.12	4.11	-0.01	
1.670	1.020	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	E	0.00	1	250	340	1.36	1.36	0.00	
2.800	1.990	GENERAL MTRNG	E	0.00	1	100	196	2.06	1.96	-0.10	
6.000	4.400	DAR ALDANA DV. INV.	E	0.00	5	2405	13315	5.57	5.57	0.00	
3.850	2.220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	E	0.00	8	2214	5326	2.36	2.42	+0.06	
0.670	0.460	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	E	0.00	3	4900	2305	0.45	0.45	0.00	
0.770	0.510	NATIONAL INDS.	E	0.00	1	450	243	0.54	0.54	0.00	
1.190	0.410	INTEREST. PETRO. CHEM.	E	0.00	11	3550	1456	0.41	0.41	0.00	
1.610	1.160	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	E	0.00	13	200	240	1.22	1.20	-0.02	
1.840	0.820	ARAB FID. INVEST.	E	0.00	13	4500	3780	0.84	0.84	0.00	
1.410	0.990	JOR. INDS. RESOURCES	E	0.00	8	2650	1855	0.70	0.70	0.00	
1.040	0.810	JOR. KEM CABLE CO.	E	0.00	20	12550	13725	0.89	0.90	+0.01	
1.980	1.340	JOR. TRNS. MACHS. WEAR	E	0.00	9	2700	324	1.37	1.35	-0.02	
1.330	1.080	INTL. TOBACCO	E	0.00	3	1650	2013	1.22	1.22	0.00	
0.810	0.710	JORDAN STEEL	E	0.00	1	250	185	0.74	0.74	0.00	
0.840	0.570	KID. EAST COMPLEX	E	0.00	12	71100	42654	0.60	0.60	0.00	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 114.84 %CHG: -0.29 140 545092 1401403											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 169.89 %CHG: -0.08 242 694907 1694135											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 15/12/1997											
LAST 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	F / E	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE		
PRICE	SHARE			SHARES	SHARES						
0.570	0.300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	E	0.00	1	250	85	0.33	0.34	+0.01	
0.610	0.340	JOR. TRADS. FAC.	E	0.00	5	5950	2083	0.34	0.35	+0.01	
0.800	0.660	UNION INV. 501	E	0.00	42	17341	37240	0.71	0.71	0.00	
0.570	0.360	ARAB FID. INVEST.	E	0.00	23	53850	23181	0.42	0.43	+0.01	
1.000	0.720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	E	0.00	2	2000	1880	0.95	0.94	-0.01	
0.780	0.610	AL-DAMIRAH 751	E	0.00	1	1250	550	0.69	0.69	0.00	
0.380	0.240	JOR. TRNS. MACHS. WEAR	E	0.00	1	150	24	0.15	0.16	+0.01	
0.530	0.280	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	E	0.00	4	2500	725	0.29	0.29	0.00	
0.750	0.380	NATL. MULT. ENG. NMICO	E	0.00	39	71950	32232	0.43	0.45	+0.02	
1.200	0.890	READY MIX CONCRETE	E	0.00	8	21750	21713	1.00	1.00	0.00	
0.520	0.400	ARAB ELECT. INDS.	E	0.00	5	49750	19900	0.42	0.40	-0.02	
0.660	0.580	MID-EAST PHARM. 751	E	0.00	10	18244	7114	0.64	0.64	0.00	
1.400	0.860	UNION TOBACCO 751	E	0.00	1	150	166	1.37	1.37	0.00	
0.730	0.550	RACI PHARM.	E	0.00	2	2500	1650	0.66	0.66	0.00	
0.470	0.280	INDS. ENG.	E	0.00	1	750	218	0.28	0.29	+0.01	
0.820	0.490	NATL. POULTRY	E	0.00	25	17000	9233	0.55	0.54	-0.01	
1.000	0.670	WEDDER FOOD IND. 751	E	0.00	1	250	125	0.73	0.73	0.00	
0.720	0.710	MOD. FOOD 751 AUCTION	E	0.00	1	5000	2350	0.72	0.72	0.00	
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 172 430635 150438											

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Amra Forum Hotel Shops Amman.

Hotel InterContinental Jordan proudly introduces a new General Manager

AMMAN, THE city to the Citadel welcomes a new General Manager at the Jordan InterContinental Hotel. Jonathan Soper, a veteran in the profession, brings with him twenty seven years of experience in hotel business, of which twenty four years in a management position. Mr. Soper joined the InterContinental family in 1980. His experience is reinforced by his strong educational background in Hotel Management. He is a graduate of 1972 from the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne, Switzerland.

Mr. Soper will succeed Chawqi Ayoub as General Manager for Hotel InterContinental Amman and in addition he also holds the position of Regional Director of



Operations Jordan for InterContinental Hotels & Resorts. He arrives from the United Arab Emirates where he held the position of General Manager for the Abu Dhabi InterContinental Hotel which was voted in 1996 as Best Hotel, Middle East/Africa and in the same year received the Best Revenue Generation Award.

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THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Math
- Apparel
- Edgewise sword
- Cambodia's neighbor
- Chilling
- Money factory
- Beige shade
- Funt's request
- Andes autocat
- Start of a quote by 28 Down
- Water passage
- Tin Pan Alley letters
- 6 on the phone
- Creator of Oz
- Tax pers.
- 28 Down's number, once?
- Toxin or surgeon's starter
- Broadway success
- European eagle
- More of the quote
- Bank pyrr.
- Pluto, lo Romans
- Unmannerly folk
- First name of 28 Down
- Shakespearean contraction
- Chaplain's daughter
- Twosome
- Julia, the chef
- Porch pillars
- End of the quote
- Predatory bird
- Task
- Renoir film
- DIY buys
- Word after A or Asia
- Polish-German border river
- Significance
- "Trees" and "Birches"
- As you

DOWN

- Oodles
- Pleasure cruiser
- More tender
- Tidal wave
- Hernando, the explorer
- Twain of Romulus
- Ambler or idle
- Grain depository
- Be likely true
- Gives off
- Disney-animated
- Bus, letter abbr.
- Sked letters
- Yang's partner
- Da Valera
- Mimicry
- Singer LaBelle
- Speaker of the quote
- Diving birds of northern seas
- Mentalist Celler
- Of Hindu scripture
- Erse relative
- Part of MIT
- High time?
- Residence
- Rock group
- Fighters
- Rock-speaker's pause-filler
- Overmothering mothers
- End of a spat?
- Drepping
- monastery's site
- Top-notch memory
- Gethysburg victor
- San Fran griddle
- Dudley Dorights
- grp.
- Nail Young song
- Schuss
- Little rapper

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

AMO to implement stricter export standards from beginning of next year

**** THE AGRICULTURAL Marketing Organisation (AMO) will start implementing the regulations concerning the terms for exporting fresh Jordanian fruits and vegetables to Arab and European markets from the beginning of next year.** AMO Director General Salem Lawzi has emphasised.

"The organisation will stop any export shipment of produce if it was in violation of the regulations and export terms issued by the AMO," he said, adding: "We will not permit any producer to export agricultural products in a way that does not conform to the terms and regulations put by AMO for exports." Dr. Lawzi explained that the aim is to protect the good reputation of the Jordanian products in Arab and European markets and to maintain these markets in addition to benefit from any opportunity to export our farm products to new markets.

Dr. Lawzi indicated that there have been many developments and changes on the regional and international levels such as the signing of the partnership agreement with the European Union and the Jordanian entry in free trade zone between the Arab countries. Noting that such a zone is expected to start from the beginning of next year, Dr. Lawzi pointed out that customs tariffs will be reduced by 10 per cent

on the products entering the Jordanian market from countries participating in the free zone project.

The AMO chief urged producers, exporters and food processing industries to live up to these challenges and to deal with them with full awareness and responsibility to maintain the good reputation of Jordanian farm products. He also urged exporters to maintain contact with the AMO to be aware of developments and needs in order to meet the terms required for production and export to various markets.

Dr. Lawzi said that Arab markets have become increasingly tough with regard to packing and packaging as well as using suitable cartons due to competition from other countries in the region. The competitors, he added, are putting products similar to Jordanian produce on the markets and as such, "it is necessary to be watchful on this issue and to respond carefully for any developments in order to safeguard these markets."

The AMO chief concluded by describing the experimental shipment to Romania as a success despite the large losses to some exporters who used unsatisfactory export methods and polystyrene cartons which are not favoured in European countries (Al Ra'i).

Government urged to intervene to help stranded Jordanian drivers

By Ahmad Al Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan's Truck Owners Association urged the government Monday to intervene with Ankara to allow the entry of 70 Jordanian fuel tankers stranded on the Syrian-Turkish border for nearly three weeks.

They are among a convoy of 167 Jordanian tankers that were ferrying diesel imported from Russia via the Syrian port of Tartous to Turkish border areas under a contract that ran into trouble after it was approved by Ankara and Damascus, private and public sector transport officials told the Jordan Times.

Ankara banned them from entering 21 days ago, apparently because of a problem with Damascus "caused by oversupply of cheap Russian diesel that made its way into other areas of Turkey instead of remaining limited to border areas with Syria," one said.

"Syrian and Turkish trucks were stocking profits from the difference in price between the Russian-imported diesel and diesel available in the Turkish market from other sources," he added.

"So Turkey issued a military ruling banning the Jordanian trucks stranded on the joint border from entering to protect its national interests and our trucks were the victims," they added.

Several days ago and after mediation by the Jordanian embassy in Ankara, Jordanian tankers began trickling into Turkish border areas to empty diesel supplies, the private and public sector officials said.

"We were informed by the Jordanian embassy in Ankara that Turkish authorities allowed 44 trucks to enter Turkey and empty the diesel," a Transport Ministry spokesman said.

"But we have no other information on the remaining trucks and we do not know when Turkey will allow them to leave its territory and return home," he added.

The trucks are operating under a contract awarded by the Syrian Ministry of Transport through the joint Jordanian-Syrian Transport Company to Jordan's Odeh Naber and Sons Transport Company and individual tanker owners.

Turkish diplomats in Jordan were not available for comment. But initially they said they believed the trucks were banned from entering on suspicion they were carrying illegal supplies of fuel oil from Iraq.

U.N. economic sanctions imposed on Iraq seven years ago have banned Baghdad from exporting oil and other goods and has restricted its imports to a squeezed list of medical supplies and other humanitarian commodities.

Findings of local study spur idea of forming association for junior Jordanian businessmen

By Ghaila Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Seventy of Jordan's younger generation of businessmen hope to set up an association during a meeting on Wednesday to enable them perform better in a global market.

The meeting, organised by Germany's Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), comes after a local study found that most private-sector businesses in Jordan are family owned non-risk takers — a move that could hamper their expansion.

"The meeting hopes to create an appropriate space for young entrepreneurs to express themselves and their needs especially at a time when Jordan is integrating into the world economy through its recent association agreement with the European Union (EU) and its upcoming accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO)," said Ulrich Vogt, FNF representative in Jordan

and Lebanon.

He told the Jordan Times the parley was expected to lay the foundations for a junior businessmen association.

The meeting will discuss the findings of a study by Jordan University Professor Nassim Barham of 131 Jordanian private sector enterprises.

The study found that most of the businesses are family-owned, "which means safe investments because care of the family is the most important incentive," according to an FNF statement.

This may hinder their expansion through increasing equity by forming shareholding companies that could be listed on the stock market with improved accounting transparency and clearer decision-making structures.

Dr. Barham's study found out that 53.5 per cent of these firms were small-scale enterprises employing less than ten staffers and that 43.8 per cent of the Jordanian

entrepreneurs began doing business after the age of 30.

It also revealed that the Jordanian entrepreneur is not a risk taker as he/she "invests in times of economic growth, and does not act in periods of recession, in spite of government incentives," the FNF statement explained.

Officials say a new business mentality was required after Jordan and the EU signed an association agreement on Nov. 24 gradually establishing a free trade area by the year 2010 — a key incentive for Jordan to upgrade the standards of its infant and mostly subsidised industries.

Amman also hopes to join the Geneva-based WTO next year.

"A new generation of entrepreneurs beyond the traditional inherited business philosophy has to play a role in the world economic reality," added the statement.

Seminar Chairman Yusuf Mansur, head of the technical department

at the planning ministry, said the meeting is aimed at creating a parley "for business people to share information, views and experiences and to create shared visions for the future of Jordan's economy."

"We will guarantee that the successes of today are sustained and the failures are put back by shaping the future for these young businessmen," he told the Jordan Times.

He described the entrepreneurs who will attend the forum as "a product of the same school, well-versed in the use of modern technology and international financial tools used in investment who can unleash their creativity in a society where they can all understand each other."

"Typical young entrepreneurs are used to technology, computers, they cannot travel without a laptop and they speak two or three languages," he said.

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.7710	0.6122	1.4307	130.78	1.4193	1738.10	1.8990	5.9428	
DE Mark	0.5647	1.0000	0.8079	73.71	0.8007	979.86	1.1289	3.3493	
GB Sterling	1.6334	2.8953	1.0000	2.3370	2.1383	2837.23	3.2830	9.6986	
CH Franc	0.6990	123.76	0.4273	1.0000	91.39	0.9918	1212.17	139.51	4.1456
JP Yen	0.0076	1.3533	0.4672	1.0924	1.0000	1.0843	13.26	152.48	4.5344
CA Dollar	0.7046	1.2511	0.4265	1.0118	1.08	1.2265	1.4092	4.1887	
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0196	0.3520	0.0923	1328.90	0.0167	11.48	3.4159	
NL Guilder	0.6003	88.71	0.3062	71.52	65.49	0.7105	869.64	2.9716	
FR Franc	0.1683	0.2985	0.1030	24.0866	22.02	0.2391	33.64	33.6400	

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	IRP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7085	3.7505	0.3770	3.6410	0.3049	3.6725	1623.00	3.3970
Jordan Dinar	1.4114	1.0000	5.2336	0.5321	5.1390	0.4303	5.1841	2148.51	4.7946
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1889	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0813	0.98	406.08	0.9057
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8793	9.9483	1.0000	9.68	0.8088	9.74	4038.79	9.0105
Qatar Dinar	0.2746	0.1946	1.0301	1.0301	1.0000	0.0837	1.01	416.29	0.9330
Kuwait Dinar	3.2903	2.3241	12.3028	1.2287	11.94	1.0000	12.05	4896.90	0.9330
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1929	1.0211	1.0208	0.9913	0.0830	1.00	414.66	0.9249
Lebanese/1000	0.06	0.4682	2.4626	0.2475	2.3907	0.2002	2.4118	1000.00	2.2304
Egyptian	0.2944	0.2086	1.1041	0.1110	1.0718	0.0897	1.0812	448.34	1.0000

Energy									
Oil	Last	Previous							
Brent	17.09	17.30							
W. Texas	16.16	16.18							
Bonny	17.09	17.30							
Dubai	16.40	16.40							
UL Gas	175.00	175.00							

Metal Prices									
Commodity	Unit	Price							
Gold (oz's)	283.4	283.9							
Silver (oz's)	5.88	5.8							
Platinum (oz's)	352	354							
AL (3 Months)	1537	1542							
CU (3 Months)	1775	1780							
Zinc (3 Months)	1127	1130							
Lead (3 Months)	527	530							
Ni (3 Months)	5990	6010							

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	9 Months	1 Year				
USD	5.91	6.80	6.88	6.84	6.82				
GBP	7.25	7.58	7.50	7.50	7.50				
JPY	0.16	0.16	0.30	0.28	0.30				
DEM	3.66	3.65	3.78	3.61	3.69				
FRF	3.44	3.57	3.70	3.80	3.80				
CHF	1.35	1.53	1.61	1.55	1.73				
ITL	6.07	5.97	5.65	5.36	5.18				

Energy										
Commodity	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	Price	Unit	
Coffee (c/lbs)	183.57	Spot	Cocoa (\$/ton)	1784	Spot	Sugar (\$/ton)	296.4	Spot	Wheat (\$/ton)	108
Soya (c/lbs)	24.32	Spot	Tea (c/lbs)	158	Spot	Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot	Rice (\$/ton)	370

* JOD Cross Rates

Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1689	1.1717
DE Mark	0.3974	0.3994
CH Franc	0.4911	0.4936
FR Franc	0.1187	0.1193
JP Yen	0.5381	0.5408
NL Guilder	0.3527	0.3545
IT Lira	0.4053	0.4073

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

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Jaguars pounce at playoff chance

BUFFALO (AFP) — The Jacksonville Jaguars went in through the front door and Tampa Bay went in through the back, but two more teams missed their chance to clinch places in the National Football League playoffs on Sunday.

Four teams had a chance to claim postseason berths with victories.

Only Jacksonville did it, with a 20-14 win over the Buffalo Bills. Mark Brunell threw for 317 yards and a touchdown and ran for a score as the Jaguars secured at least a wildcard berth in the AFC.

The other three: Tampa Bay, Minnesota and Miami all went down to defeat, but the Buccaneers were assured of an NFC wildcard berth when Super Bowl champions Green Bay defeated the Carolina Panthers in a rematch of last year's NFC championship game.

Brett Favre threw for 256 yards and three touchdowns in the 31-10 victory as the Packers eliminated the Panthers from playoff contention with one week remaining in the regular season.

That was good news for the Bucs in the wake of the New York Jets' 31-0 demolition job, the Jets' first win in a December game since 1993. Off-maligned cornerback Otis Smith returned two interceptions for touchdowns and New York — who finished last season 1-15 — regained control of their playoff destiny joining Miami and New England at the top of the AFC East with 9-6 records.

Scott Mitchell's one-yard touchdown pass to Herman Moore gave the Buccaneers left gave the Detroit Lions hope for a possible playoff berth with a 14-13 victory over the reeling Vikings, who have lost five straight.

And Jim Harbaugh threw a career-high four touchdown passes, including three to tight end Ken Dillger, as the Indianapolis Colts prevented the Dolphins from clinching a playoff berth with a 41-0 rout.

"Some days everything just goes wrong and this was just one of those days," said Miami coach Jimmy Johnson. "This was just an awful game."

Harbaugh finished 20-of-26 for 255 yards and was 16-of-20 for 218 yards with four scores in the first half



Kansas City Chiefs receiver Lake Dowson looks at the ball before catching and making a 21 yard touchdown reception off a Rich Gannon pass in the second quarter of the game against the San Diego Chargers. Kansas City won 29-7 (Reuters photo)

alone. Indianapolis built a 34-0 halftime lead, with 31 coming in the second period as the Colts set a franchise record for points in a quarter.

The 31 points also were the most allowed by the Dolphins in a quarter in team history. Miami's Dan Marino completed just 7-of-15 passes for 71 yards, the second-lowest total in his career.

"There is absolutely no explanation for what happened today out there," a stunned Marino said.

"In the NFL, if you don't line up and play hard every Sunday, you are going to get your butt kicked. They really handed it to us today."

Cincinnati defeated Dallas 31-24, eliminating the Cowboys from playoff

contention for the first time since 1990. Boomer Esiason passed for 242 yards and two touchdowns as the Bengals erupted for 31 unanswered points and Corey Dillon rushed for 129 yards to become the third Cincinnati rookie to reach 1,000 yards in a season.

The Cowboys, who had won the last five NFC East titles, rallied for two touchdowns in the fourth quarter to make things interesting, before dropping their fourth game in a row. That's Dallas' longest skid since losing the last seven games in 1989.

Morten Andersen kicked his 25th career game-winning field goal, a 33-yarder as time expired, to give Atlanta their fifth straight win. 20-17 over

Philadelphia.

The outcome extinguished the Eagles' playoff bid, and shortly thereafter Atlanta's own flickering hopes were snuffed out by Detroit's rally over Minnesota. The Kansas City Chiefs closed in on home field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs with a 29-7 victory over San Diego. The Baltimore Ravens beat the Tennessee Oilers 21-19 in the last game to be played at 43-year-old Memorial Stadium. Memorial was the home of Baltimore's beloved Colts from 1954 to 1983, after which they were spirited away to Indianapolis. The Ravens will move into new digs next season, near the Camden Yards baseball park.

Whitbread leader strikes trouble

PERTH (AFP) — The Norwegian boat, Innovation Kvaerner, overall leader in the Whitbread round-the-world classic, has lost ground after hitting trouble on the second day of the third leg from Fremantle, Western Australia, to Sydney, New South Wales.

Race organisers said Monday the yacht had developed a rigging problem which threatened to bring down her mast and had to drop sails temporarily so repair equipment could be dropped by helicopter Sunday night.

"She has lost ground, but perhaps not a great deal," said David Wise, from the race control office in Southampton, England.

"The boats are now in a fan formation, spread over about 80 kilometres, as they go round the corner (the south-western tip of Western Australia) before heading into the Southern Ocean and on to Sydney."

"She is very wide and has obviously made a ploy to go south."

The nine yachts in the event left Fremantle Saturday afternoon at the start of the 3,985 kilometre third leg.

Innovation Kvaerner skipper Knut Frostad told race control Sunday his crew had discovered dents and small buckles on the lower part of the mast.

The boat was forced to anchor while repair material was dropped, but resumed after a short delay. Repairs were being made as the yacht attempted to make up lost ground.

At last report, Innovation Kvaerner was seventh.

The Swedish yacht, EF Language, skippered by Paul Cayard, was still leading the fleet.

Bolton stun Derby

BOLTON (AFP) — Bolton Wanderers came back from two goals down to grab a 3-3 draw against Derby in one of the most entertaining Premiership encounters of the season on Sunday.

Bolton seemed set to pay for wasting a string of golden opportunities when Italians Stefano Eranio and Francesco Baiano, who scored twice, put the visitors into a 3-1 lead with 20 minutes to go.

But the home side, who had taken the lead with an Alan Thompson penalty on 50 minutes, produced a stirring comeback and levelled the scores with goals from Welsh star Nathan Blake and midfielder Jamie Pollock.

Earlier, Bolton's lack of fire power, which has held them back in the Premiership this season, threatened to prove costly again as they squandered a glut of first-half chances.

Bolton had only beaten Derby once in their last five attempts and wasteful finishing from Blake, Scott Sellars and Andy Todd did little to suggest they could improve on that record.

Bolton almost drew first blood in the sixth minute when Nathan Blake met Fairclough's flicked header from Scott Sellars' corner. The ball bounced back off the bar and into the path of

Peter Beardsley but the ex-Newcastle star's shot spun behind off Gary Rowett.

Five minutes after the interval, Bolton finally made the breakthrough that their first half superiority deserved.

Franssen was brought down in the area under a clumsy challenge by Croatian defender Igor Stimac. Thompson converting from the spot.

But Bolton's joy was short-lived as the Rams hit back with an equaliser five minutes later when Eranio blasted into the roof of the net after the home side failed to clear their lines.

Ten minutes later, the visitors took the lead through Derby's other Italian, Baiano who pounced from close range after Bolton keeper Gavin Ward who failed to hold Dean Sturridge's cross.

Baiano grabbed his second and Derby's third in the 69th minute when a one-two with Sturridge gave him the easiest of chances.

Blake reduced the deficit on 73 minutes with a towering header from Thompson's pin-point cross from the left-wing.

Roared on by the home fans, Bolton equalised minutes later when Thompson released Per Frandsen on the halfway line.

SCOREBOARD

NBA			
Seattle	107	LA Clippers	101
Atlanta	93	Sacramento	89
Vancouver	110	Houston	105
LA Lakers	119	Dallas	89

French League			
PSG	1	Metz	1
Monaco	1	Rennes	0
Bordeaux	0	Cannes	1
Guingamp	1	Auxerre	1
Lens	0	Marseille	1
Lyon	0	Le Havre	1
Toulouse	1	Montpellier	1
Nantes	2	Strasbourg	1
Chateauroux	1	Bastia	1

Spanish First Division			
Tenerife	2	Atletico Madrid	2
Real Madrid	1	Merida	0
Valencia	4	SD Compostela	1
Dep. La Coruna	1	Real Sociedad	1
Sporting Gijon	1	Salamanca	1
R. Santander	2	Zaragoza	3
Valladolid	1	Oviedo	0
Betis	2	Malloca	1
Barcelona	3	Espanyol	1
Athletic Bilbao	2	Celta	1

German First Division			
VfL Bochum	0	B. Leverkusen	0
Hamburg	1	Wolfsburg	2
Cologne	4	B. Dortmund	2
Schalke	1	Duisburg	1
Stuttgart	1	A. Bielefeld	0
Karlsruhe	0	1860 Munich	0
Bayern Munich	3	B. Moncheng.	2
Hertha Berlin	2	Kaiserslautern	0
Rostock	1	Bremen	2

Greek championship			
Olympiakos	2	Panionios	0
Heraklis	0	Panathinaikos	1
Panathinaikos	1	PAOK Salonika	4
Ethnikos	0	OFI Crete	1
Apollon	1	Proodeftiki	0
Veria	2	Xanthi	1
Kavala	1	Pyrgos	1
Ionikos v Kalamata — postponed			

Confederation Cup			
Group A		Australia	0
Brazil	0	Saudi Arabia	0
Mexico	5		
Group B		South Africa	0
UAE	1		

Turkish League			
C.e Dardanel	3	Kayserispor	0
Fenerbahce	7	Sekerspor	0
Antalyaspor	3	Besiktas	3
Bursaspor	2	Samsunspor	3
Vanspor	0	Genclerbirli	0
Karabukspor	1	Altay	1
Kocaelispor	1	Gaziantepspor	1
Istanbulspor	2	Galatasaray	1
Ankaragucu	1	Trabzonspor	3

English Premiership			
Bolton	3	Derby	3

Austrians appeal Maier disqualification

VIENNA (AFP) — The Austria Ski Federation on Monday said it was appealing against Sunday's disqualification of Hermann Maier in the World Cup giant slalom at Val d'Isere.

Maier won the event but saw his triumph annulled less than an hour after the race for celebrating by taking off a ski before crossing the red line in the finishing area and holding it up to show off his sponsor's name.

Federation official Hans Pum lodged an official protest with the international federation saying that Maier, who beat defending world champion Michael Von Gruenigen of Switzerland, "did not violate the spirit of the law."

Hotel InterContinental Jordan visits Mar-Mansour Orphanage Home



MEMBERS OF the management and staff of InterContinental Jordan accompanied Father Christmas to visit the Mar-Mansour Orphanage Home. The children were delighted to see Santa who gave them their Xmas presents. In appreciation the children performed some beautiful dances & dabkas.

Seattle beat Los Angeles Clippers

SEATTLE (AP) — Vin Baker, Gary Payton and Sam Perkins each scored 21 points and the Seattle SuperSonics used a 17-0 run to beat the Los Angeles Clippers 107-101 Sunday night in Seattle.

Payton had 14 assists for the Sonics, who trailed 86-77 in the final minute of the third period before their defence took over. They forced the Clippers into 11 fourth-quarter turnovers and held them scoreless for the first six minutes of the final period.

Lamond Murray led the Clippers with 21 points, while Brent Barry and Eric Piatkowski had 18 apiece. Perkins didn't miss a shot in the game, he was 5-for-5 from the field, including 4-for-4 from 3-point range, and 7-for-7 from the foul line.

Atlanta Hawks 93, Sacramento Kings 89: In Sacramento, California, Mookie Blaylock scored 24 of his 26 points in the second half and Christian Laettner hit a tie breaking jumper with two seconds

left as Atlanta beat Sacramento.

After Sacramento's Billy Owens hit a jumper with 16 seconds remaining to tie it at 89-89, Laettner put the hawks ahead by sinking a jumper from the corner.

After using their last time-out, the Kings couldn't get the ball inbounds so they called an illegal time-out that resulted in a technical free throw by Atlanta's Steve Smith. The Kings then fouled Blaylock, who made a free throw for the final margin.

Corliss Williamson led Sacramento with 20 points. • Vancouver Grizzlies 110, Houston Rockets 105: In Vancouver, British Columbia, Bryant Reeves scored a season-high 23 points and Shareef Abdul-Rahim added a career-high 13 assists as Vancouver defeated Houston.

The Grizzlies have won two straight home games and seven this season, one short of their total at home for all of last season.

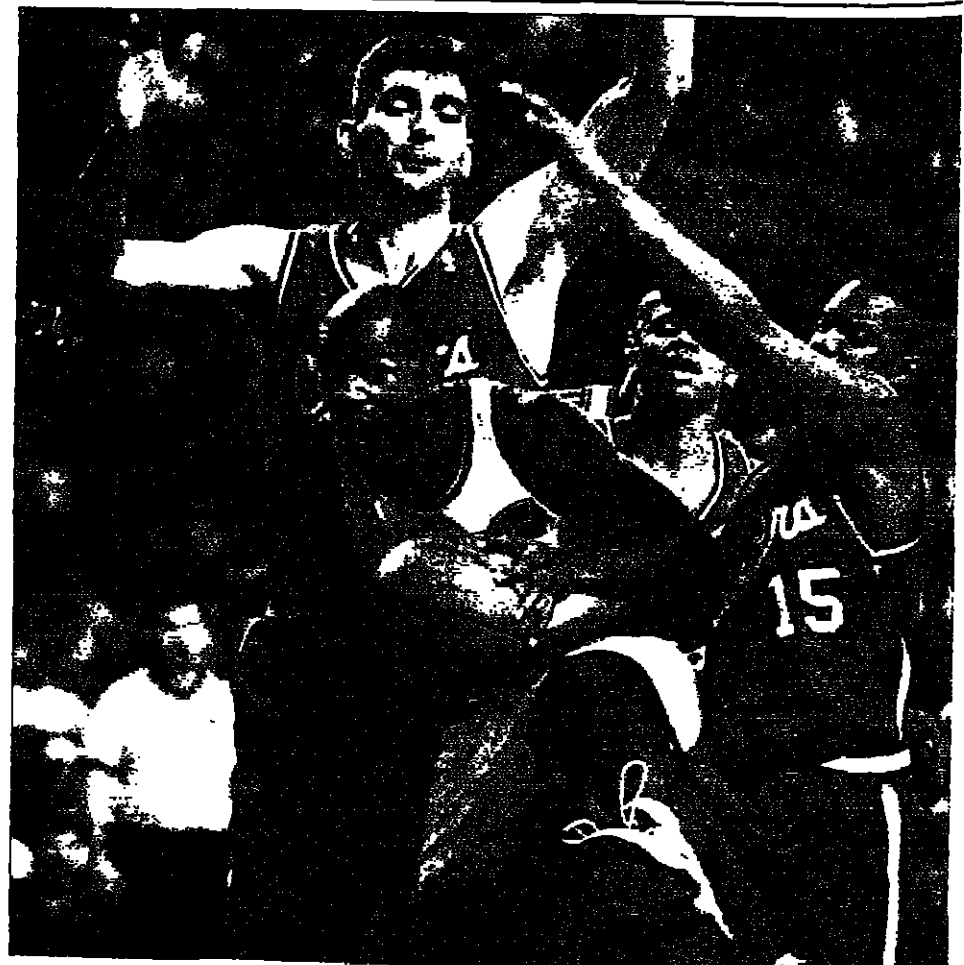
Kevin Willis led the Rockets with 28 points,

and Charles Barkley had 22 points and 21 rebounds. Houston has lost two in a row following a season-high, nine-game winning streak.

• Los Angeles Lakers 119, Dallas Mavericks 89: In The Los Angeles suburb of Inglewood, Kobe Bryant scored 16 of his career-high 30 points in the second quarter, leading the Los Angeles Lakers over the Dallas Mavericks.

Bryant topped his previous high of 27, set two nights earlier against Houston. Rick Fox added 19 points for the Lakers, while Eddie Jones had 17 and Elden Campbell 15.

Michael Finley and Dennis Scott each scored 18 points for the Mavericks, who lost their fifth consecutive game and 11th in a row to the Lakers.



Seattle SuperSonics Greg Anthony (2) pulls down a rebound between Los Angeles Clipper Stojko Vrankovic (L) and Darrick Martin (15) during first half play at Key Arena. Seattle won 107-101 (Reuters photo)

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	HERCULES AND THE AMAZON WOMEN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Jim Carrey ... in LIAR — LIAR Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in AL MASEER (Arabic) Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	A CRIME AT THE WHITE HOUSE MURDER AT 1600 Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 MR. BEAN Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only	ABDOUN Harrison Ford ... in AIR FORCE ONE Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN Mel Gibson & Julia Roberts... in CONSPIRACY THEORY Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	



Denmark's Anja Andersen (C) tries for a shot next to Norwegian opponents Tonje Sagstuen (L), Kari Solem (2ndL) and Trine Haltvik (R) during the first half of their final match at the Women's Handball World Championship in Berlin. Denmark won the final match against Norway 33-20 (Reuters photo)

SPORTS IN BRIEF

England to play Morocco

RABAT (AFP) — England are in line for an invitation to play fellow World Cup qualifiers Morocco in May's Hassan II Cup as part of both sides' preparations for next summer's French adventure. Moroccan coach Henri Michel wants his side to line up as many stiff tests as possible aside from February's African Cup before the World Cup. Michel sees the Hassan II tournament from May 27 to 29 as the ideal opportunity for the North Africans, who face Brazil, Scotland and Norway in their World Cup group, to gain experience against top sides.

Dugarry set to partner Ravanelli

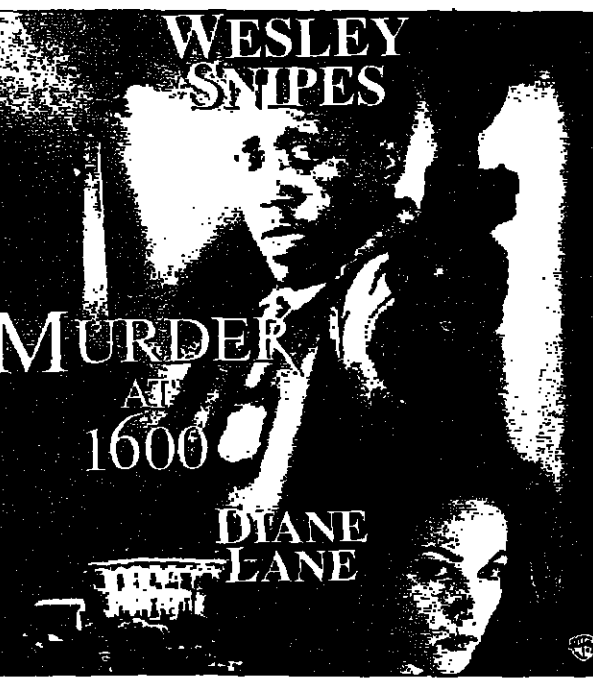
MARSEILLE (AFP) — Marseille's Fabrizio Ravanelli is set to get a new strike partner with the club ready to complete the signing of Barcelona's French striker Christophe Dugarry. "We have basically agreed terms but there are still a few details to iron out," said Dugarry after meeting Marseille officials. Dugarry, who only joined Barca in the summer from AC Milan, would cost around \$5 million.

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MOE wants to purchase the goods covered by the bids listed below which are financed through World Bank Loan No. (3864-Jo.) Sector Educational Project - Phase II. Interested eligible bidders may obtain Bidding Documents from Furniture & Equipment Tenders' Division / MOE upon payment of a non-refundable fee (US\$150 for each bid) starting from Tuesday Dec. 16, 1997 till 12:15 p.m. of Thursday Feb. 5, 1998. The latest date for submission of inquiries pertinent to these tenders is Thursday Feb. 12, 1998. Bids shall be deposited in the BID BOX at the Furniture & Equipment Tenders' Division / MOE, or by Mail, not later than 11:00 a.m. (local time) on Wednesday Feb. 18, 1998. The bids shall be opened on Wednesday Feb. 18, 1998 at 3:00 p.m. (local time). Bidders are informed that each bid is divided into Lots, and each Lot will be considered as a different contract, and their bids should be priced on a LOT BY LOT basis.

BID NO.	SUBJECT	LOTS
2/97	compulsory schools' physics lab.	electric, optical, general, magnet & heat experiments equipment (5 lots)
3/97	secondary schools' physics lab.	mechanical, optical, heat, hydrodynamics, electro-static, sound, magnet, electric & radio-activity experiments (9 lots)
4/97	pre-vocational education workshop.	House electric appliances, kitchen tools, garden tools, electric industrial hand equipment, industrial hand tools, plumbing tools, benches-shears-barrows, CO2-fire extinguishers, sewing machines & scissors, open gas cookers with ovens (10 lots)

Chairman
of Special Tenders Committee

2nd Islamic Games for Women Jordanian delegation misses opening ceremony, general assembly meetings

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

JORDAN'S 14-MEMBER delegation joined those of 12 other nations as the 2nd Islamic Games for Women got underway in Tehran.

The events of the Dec. 13-21 Games are held in three Iranian cities — Tehran, Isfahan and Rushd.

The Jordanian delegation had left Amman Friday but missed Saturday's opening ceremony after their flight was delayed in Damascus and ended up arriving Sunday morning.

Jordan also missed the meeting of the General Assembly of the Islamic Solidarity Council which was apparently held last month.

Nine Jordanian athletes will be competing in athletics, table tennis and badminton in the Kingdom's first participation in the event — described as

a "symbolic one" by Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) Secretary-General Ismat Kurdi.

The delegation also includes four officials and a referee.

The event officially opened with a ceremony in the Azadi Stadium west of Tehran, and is the first such event organised by Iran since February 1993.

The exclusively female Games were originally expected to bring together about 1000 athletes from 26 countries.

The Games are organised by Iran's Sports Solidarity Council for Women, headed by Faezeh Hashemi, daughter of former Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

According to the officials, the Games were originally to be hosted by Pakistan. But they returned to Iran after Islamabad pleaded financial difficulties.

Events at the Games are athletics, chess, swimming, basketball, volleyball, tennis, shooting, handball, badminton, gymnastics, squash, equestrian and karate.

Jordan's delegation includes Amal Mutari who won a bronze medal at July's Pan-Arab Games, and Alia Tufahha — a veteran player of the table tennis national team.

With all expenses to be covered by the hosts, four other Jordanian federations had initially expressed interest to take part. Those include basketball, karate, handball and gymnastics.

The Games which will be held less than two weeks after the Iranian capital hosted the 1st Southwest Asian Games which were open to men's teams only.

Jordan took part in eight sports and won ten medals at the event.

Scots skipper McAllister may miss World Cup

LONDON (AFP) — Scotland captain Gary McAllister will undergo keyhole surgery later this week in a bid to solve a mystery knee problem which could threaten his chances of playing in the World Cup.

The Coventry midfielder

will have the operation to try to locate the source of swelling around his right knee after breaking down 30 minutes into his side's Premiership match with Tottenham on Saturday.

McAllister believed there was no more than 'wear and

tear' on the knee after a scan two weeks ago showed no serious damage — but the latest setback has sparked renewed fears over his participation in this summer's finals.

However, despite his disappointment after undergo-

ing medical tests, the 32-year-old remained optimistic that the operation will determine the exact nature of the problem.

"It doesn't feel like a major injury and it could be something lying there that is causing the pain," he said.

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Troubled Wright offered career leap

LONDON (AFP) — Troubled Arsenal star Ian Wright, who has been urged to retire from football, has been offered the chance of further sporting glory — in basketball.

The 34-year-old England striker, whose form has slumped alarmingly in recent months, has an open offer to join the Budweiser League's London Leopards when he decides to quit football.

Leopards coach Billy Mims said Monday: "As far as I'm concerned, Ian is welcome here any time. If Arsenal don't want him that's fine by me."

"He's a natural athlete and has all the raw talent you need to make a great professional basketball player. I like Ian particularly because he's the only footballer in the country who plays with the same passion I coach with."

Mims, who led Leopards to the league title and National Cup win last season, had dinner with Wright at the Carlton Sports Awards in London at Babe Ruth's, a restaurant with a built-in basketball court.

The Arsenal ace, who performed a dunk for onlookers, later signed a mock contract to play with the Leopards.

"He's told me he thinks the slam-dunk is the best expression of supremacy an athlete has in any sport," Mims added.

"Whenever the bad boys drive him out of football, as long as I remain Leopards coach there will always be a place for him here."

Meanwhile, Wright has been backed by former Arsenal strikers Frank Stapleton and Niall Quinn to prove to his critics he is not finished. The Irish duo cannot believe calls from some Gunners supporters for Wright to retire at the end of the season.

Stapleton feels Wright is being unfairly criticised for the team's erratic results.

"He's going through a poor spell and the fans are just looking for a scapegoat," he said.

"It's just a knee-jerk reaction to say he should retire because a player like him does not become bad overnight. He's still a quality player and a great goalscorer."

Quinn claims calls for Wright to hang up his boots are "absolutely ridiculous."

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Iraq grants access to 'sensitive sites,' but not palaces — Butler

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq stuck to its ban on granting access to presidential palaces on Monday but agreed to let U.N. arms experts inspect other "sensitive" sites, U.N. disarmament chief, Richard Butler, announced.

Mr. Butler, head of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of disarming Iraq, also said after talks with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz that the file on Baghdad's proscribed germ warfare programme was still incomplete.

The two sides worked out arrangements which "we can work with, with respect to all other sensitive sites," the Australian diplomat told the British television network WTN.

"It is just the presidential palaces themselves and Iraq says 'never,'" said Mr. Butler, the text of whose interview was received by AFP.

"Now the U.N. Security Council will have to make up its mind about what it thinks

of that," said Mr. Butler after a three-hour meeting with Mr. Aziz, his second in as many days.

They were to hold a third meeting later the same day before Mr. Butler reports back Thursday to the Security Council, which has demanded "unimpeded access" for UNSCOM to inspect any sites in Iraq.

Mr. Butler said UNSCOM and Iraq agreed to divide "sensitive" sites into three categories: the palaces, security sites and sovereignty sites. UNSCOM was being barred only from the presidential palaces.

He was also not satisfied with Iraq's latest account of its biological weapons programme. "There is still a gap between what we think is the case and what Iraq says. We still haven't solved that problem," he said.

"The basket which is looking best is missiles, chemical is looking fairly good, and biology isn't," Mr. Butler said,

referring to the different categories of proscribed arms.

A U.N. oil embargo in force against Baghdad since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait cannot be lifted until UNSCOM has certified the elimination of all Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Butler reported "some progress in technical areas, in others less," during his visit to Baghdad. "Tonight, when we get together, it has to be put together as a whole result," he said, referring to the final meeting with Mr. Aziz.

British, French and Russian commissioners of UNSCOM took part in the Aziz-Butler talks, in response to Iraqi charges that the Special Commission is dominated by the United States.

Despite warnings in the Iraqi press last week that Mr. Butler's mission was doomed because Baghdad would rule out inspections of "sensitive" sites, the newspapers adopted a conciliatory tone on Monday.

Al Thawra, voice of the ruling Baath Party, said Mr. Butler was "capable, if he wants, to turn a new page and to deal with us in a new spirit."

"What we ask of Mr. Butler is that he does not ally himself with our American enemies, that he does not become an adversary," it said, urging the UNSCOM chief to remain neutral.

The talks on Sunday were the first encounter between Mr. Butler, dubbed a "mad dog" in Iraq's press, and Mr. Aziz since a crisis over UNSCOM inspections began in late October.

Since UNSCOM resumed inspections on November, after Iraq dropped a three-week ban on U.S. members of the Special Commission, it has carried out a total of 370 inspections on a daily basis, according to Iraq's news agency INA.

The inspections have been free of incident, but the arms experts have not tried to enter the sensitive sites.

Indyk meets Assad for talks on restarting peace process

DAMASCUS (AFP) — U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk met Syrian President Hafez Assad here Monday for talks expected to focus on re-starting Israeli-Syrian peace negotiations frozen for nearly two years.

Mr. Indyk, who arrived in Damascus by land from Jordan, met with Mr. Assad at the People's Palace, said Gibran Kurieh, the Syrian presidential spokesman.

The meeting was attended by Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa and the U.S. ambassador to Syria, Christopher Ross. Mr. Kurieh said.

Mr. Indyk's talks with Mr. Assad followed a two-hour meeting with Mr. Sharaa during which they discussed "the situation in the region and the prospects of establishing a comprehensive and lasting peace," an official said.

Official Syrian newspapers ran editorials on Monday condemning the government of,

right-wing Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

An editorial in the state-run Tishrin newspaper denounced the Israeli government for refusing to abide by promises made by the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for a "complete withdrawal from the Golan."

"The radical racist leaders of Tel Aviv think that their aggressiveness will scare the Arabs in general and Syria in particular. But Syria has proven that it will not give up its rights nor its lands," the daily said.

Mr. Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel, is on a tour of the Middle East that has already taken him to Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian territories. He is due in Lebanon on Tuesday.

Peace talks between Israel and Syria have been stalled since a spate of suicide bombings by Palestinian activists in Israel in February 1996.

Syria wants the talks to resume at the point where they were broken off with the previous Labour government in Israel, which Damascus insists included an agreement to hand back the Golan Heights.

Syria demands that any peace deal with the Jewish state include an agreement to return the strategic Golan plateau which Israel has occupied since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Mr. Netanyahu, since taking office in May 1996, has repeatedly urged Syria to come back to the peace negotiating table without pre-conditions, but has ruled out handing back the Golan.

Mr. Indyk's tour will pave the way for Thursday's meeting in Europe of U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Israeli and Palestinian leaders to discuss planned Israeli troop withdrawals from the West Bank.

Surgeon jailed in Egypt for death of girl after incision

CAIRO (AFP) — A surgeon has been convicted of "gross negligence" by an Egyptian court and sentenced to one year in prison after a 14-year-old girl he circumcised died, government newspapers reported on Monday.

Sunday's verdict came ahead of a Dec. 28 ruling by Egypt's top administrative court on a controversial health ministry ban on female circumcision which is contested by Islamists.

Doctor Rabbih Ibrahim Mahjub, 32, was convicted by a court in Qalyub, 20 kilometres north of Cairo, of "gross negligence and wrongfully causing the death" of Amna Abu Al Ela.

The court found that the surgeon had performed the operation in "unsanitary conditions" at the girl's home, Al Akhbar and Al Jumhuriya dailies reported.

"The doctor gave the girl a shot of anaesthesia without the assistance of an anaesthetist causing her to suffer from a drop in blood pressure leading to her death," Al Akhbar said.

The court sentenced Dr. Mahjub to one year in prison, fined him \$15 and ordered him to pay the girl's father \$150 as initial compensation.

According to official estimates, 98 per cent of Egyptian girls are circumcised and more than 70 per cent of the operations are carried out at home in unsanitary conditions, often leading to girls bleeding to death.

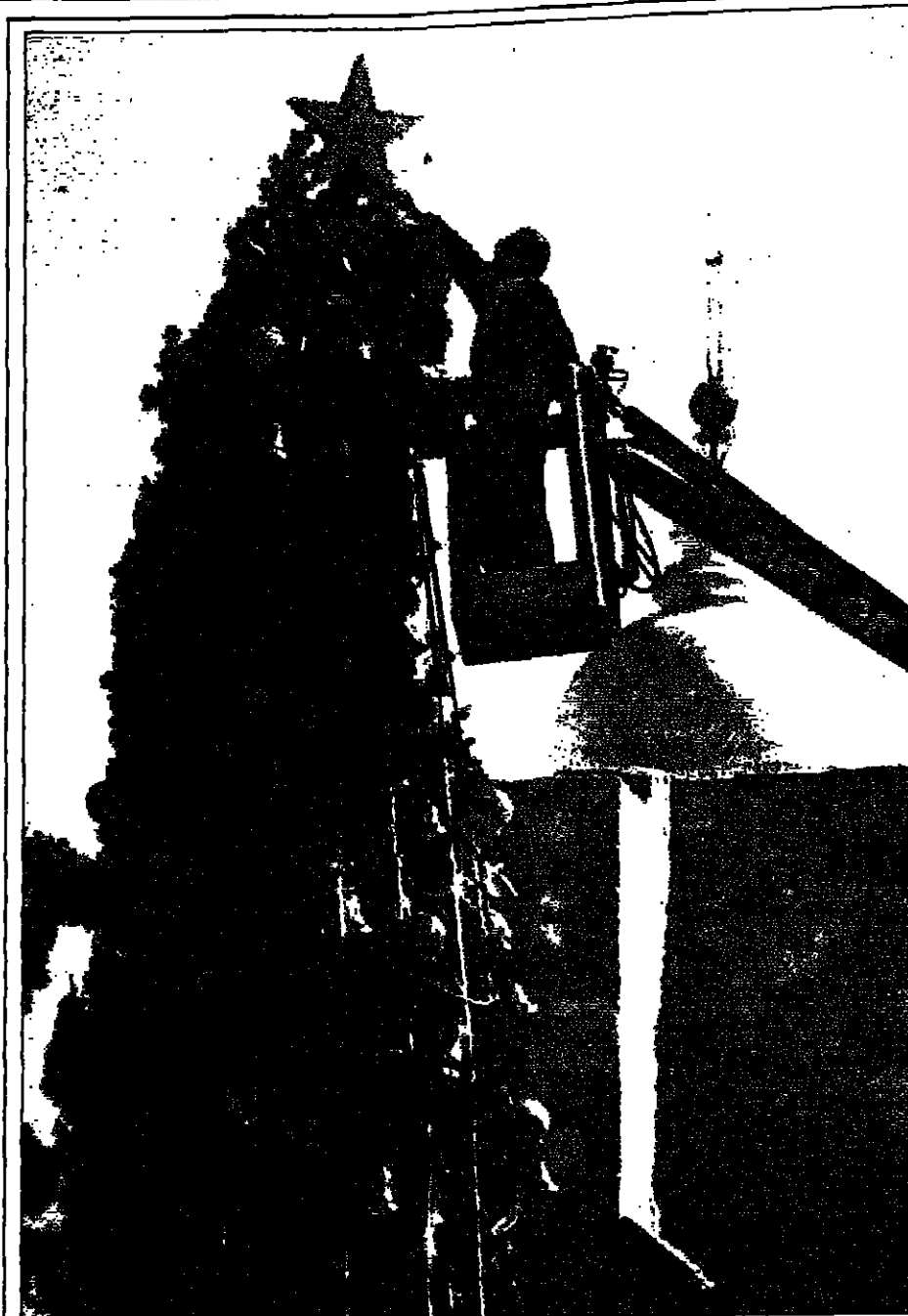
Netanyahu sends letter to Israeli spy

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli cabinet minister will deliver a letter from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to convicted American spy Jonathan Pollard when she meets him in prison this week, officials said on Sunday.

The letter says Israelis are concerned about Pollard's "ongoing suffering" and expresses the wish that he will be "a free man in the near future," said Mr. Netanyahu's spokesman, who read part of it on Israel Radio.

The radio said this was the first time an Israeli prime minister had sent a letter to Pollard, a former U.S. naval intelligence officer convicted in 1986 of passing Israel classified information on Arab countries.

Israel has never admitted it used Pollard, an American Jew, as a spy. He is serving a life sentence for the affair that strained relations between the two allies.



THE STAR IS UP: A Palestinian municipal worker places the star on top of the Christmas tree Monday outside the Church of the Nativity (rear), the traditional birthplace of Jesus Christ. As Christmas approaches, more and more tourists flock to Manger Square and the Nativity Church to see the birthplace of Christ, but many Palestinian shopkeepers report very low sales and they do not see this Christmas as being too prosperous (Reuters photo)

NATO hopes Turkey-EU row will not damage ties

BRUSSELS (R) — Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem arrived in Brussels on Monday amid some concern that his country's dramatic breach with the European Union could damage relations within the NATO alliance.

Senior NATO officials told reporters that it was premature to say what wider impact, if any, the row with the EU might have, but they made clear that NATO preferred Turkey to be "closer to Europe."

"A healthy relationship between Europe and Turkey helps NATO," one senior official at alliance headquarters said. "Turkey has to be given a perspective in Europe," he added.

Mr. Cem was in Brussels for the two-day, semi-annual meeting of NATO foreign ministers which was due to begin on Tuesday.

The Turkish government is offended that a weekend EU summit failed to formally recognise its decades-old membership application while agreeing to open negotiations with 11 other countries.

Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz has rejected an invitation to a conference of current and aspiring NATO members next year, and said Ankara will not hold talks with the EU on Cyprus, Greece or other key issues.

The move raised speculation that the Turkish parliament could, in indirect retaliation, refuse to ratify enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance, which is due to issue formal accession treaties to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic this week.

EU 'regrets' Ankara's reaction, seeks to pursue contacts

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union expressed regret Monday at Turkey's furious reaction to being left out of EU enlargement plans for the time being, but said it hoped to maintain contacts. An EU statement said that Ankara's negative interpretation of the EU decision was not justified. After being shut out of EU enlargement plans, Turkey on Sunday said it was cutting political dialogue with the bloc and rejecting an offer to take part in a new pan-European conference next year. All 15 EU members, 11 candidate countries and Turkey were invited to the conference.

Turkey has been a member of NATO since 1952. Despite an association with the EU going back to the early 1960s, it was not included on the EU's list of 11 prospective new members agreed at the EU summit in Luxembourg on Saturday.

Former communist states in Eastern and Central Europe are now all seen as potential NATO and EU members.

The Turkish cabinet responded angrily to the summit decision, insisting that the EU was trying to place special conditions on eventual Turkish membership.

Turkish sources say Greece and Germany, both fellow NATO members, are seen by Ankara as the main opponents of giving predominantly Muslim Turkey the "candidate" membership status that it seeks with the EU.

They say Turkey is offended that the Turkish parliament could, in indirect retaliation, refuse to ratify enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance, which is due to issue formal accession treaties to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic this week.

with Turkish ratification of the historic NATO enlargement to include the three former Soviet satellite states.

He added that, to his knowledge, Turkey had not revoked a NATO compromise accord with Greece — a breakthrough achieved earlier this month — which permitted the alliance to adopt a comprehensive new command structure.

Senior NATO officials praised the positive contribution Turkey made to the alliance and to overcoming problems with its ancient Aegean rival, Greece.

One noted that this was not the first time that EU-Turkish relations had been clouded. "We have not seen the commitment, engagement or fortitude of Turkey affected [in the past]," the official told reporters.

Diplomatic sources said it was no secret that the United States would like to see Turkey become a member of all major Western institutions. Prime Minister Yilmaz is scheduled to visit Washington on Friday.



Elton John to give \$34 million to Princess Diana Charity Fund

LONDON (AFP) — Elton John is to hand over a cheque for \$34 million to the Princess Diana Charity Fund, from the sales of "Candle in the Wind," the song he sang at her funeral. The Sun daily reported, John will give the cheque in the next few days to the princess' sister, Sarah McCorquodale, who is looking after the fund, the paper said. It is claimed that "Candle in the Wind" has sold 33 million copies worldwide, which would make it the best-selling single in history, outpacing Bing Crosby's 1943 chesnut "White Christmas."

BB King to sing at Vatican Xmas concert

VATICAN CITY (AFP) — Blues great BB King has a date at the Vatican for this year's traditional Christmas concert. French singer Mireille Mathieu will also be among those taking part in the concert which is raising money for a church-building project in Rome. Vatican officials said. They will be backed by the Monte Carlo Philharmonic under Renzo Serio and James DePreist. The concert is on Dec. 19 in the Paul VI room, where Pope John Paul II normally receives pilgrims.

Nanny's Brooklyn whine comes naturally to Fran Drescher

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — "People always come up to me to ask me 'Do you really talk like that?' and I say, 'What? Like what?'" says Fran Drescher, star of the hit show "The Nanny." Although her nasal Brooklyn whine is as much a feature of the show as the other characters, Drescher used to be so self-conscious about her voice that she considered vocal lessons to refine it. But when producers of "The Nanny" first heard her speak, they told her to stick with what she had.

Chumbawamba singer arrested in mini-skirt

LONDON (AFP) — Danbert Nobacon, singer of the British anarchist group Chumbawamba is indicted Italian police picked him up and put him in jail in Florence after he went out in a mini-skirt. "I was indignant, really, because I knew they had stopped me for wearing a skirt," said the singer in an interview with Melody Maker magazine. Six policemen were mobilised to get him into a cell where he was held for six hours before being released. He said the police claimed he was detained for not having his passport on him.

Frozen mummy of sacrificed Inca found in Peru

AREQUIPA (R) — Another well-preserved frozen mummy of a young Inca sacrificed to the gods more than 500 years ago has been discovered on a snow-clad Andean peak in southern Peru, archaeologists said. It is only the second find of a virtually undamaged frozen Inca mummy and should provide unique information on the civilisation's lifestyle in the mountain regions. A team led by U.S. explorer Johan Reinhard and Peruvian archaeologist Jose Antonio Chavez found the mummy at a height of 5,800 meters near the summit of Mount Ampato near Peru's second city Arequipa.

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